The UNESCO COURIER

APRIL 1993

INTERVIEW WITH LUC FERRY

JORGE ENRIQUE ADOUM

TAHAR BEN JELLOUN

ANDRÉ BRINK

JEROME CHARYN

RENÉ DEPESTRE

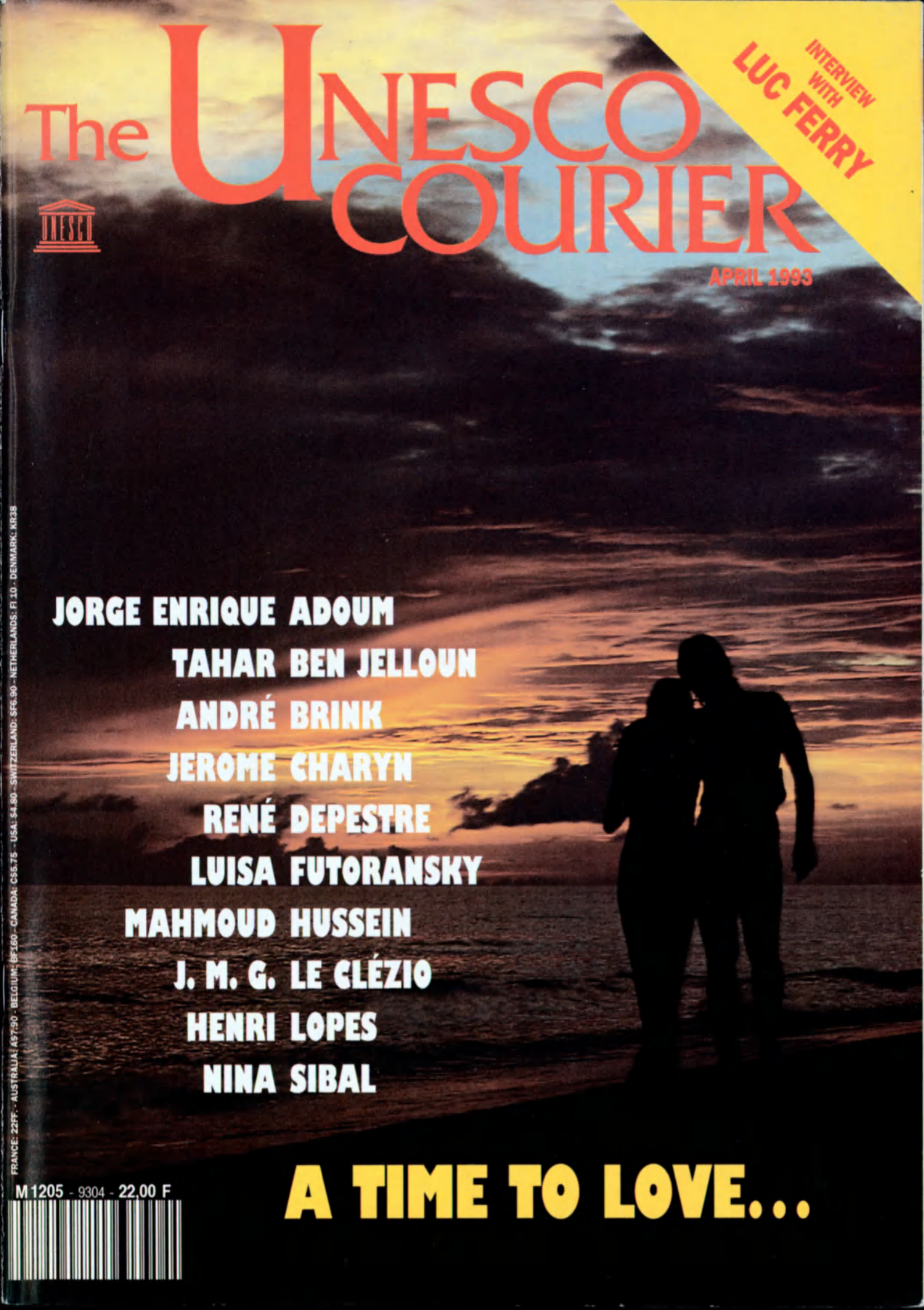
LUISA FUTORANSKY

MAHMOUD HUSSEIN

J. M. G. LE CLÉZIO

HENRI LOPES

NINA SIBAL



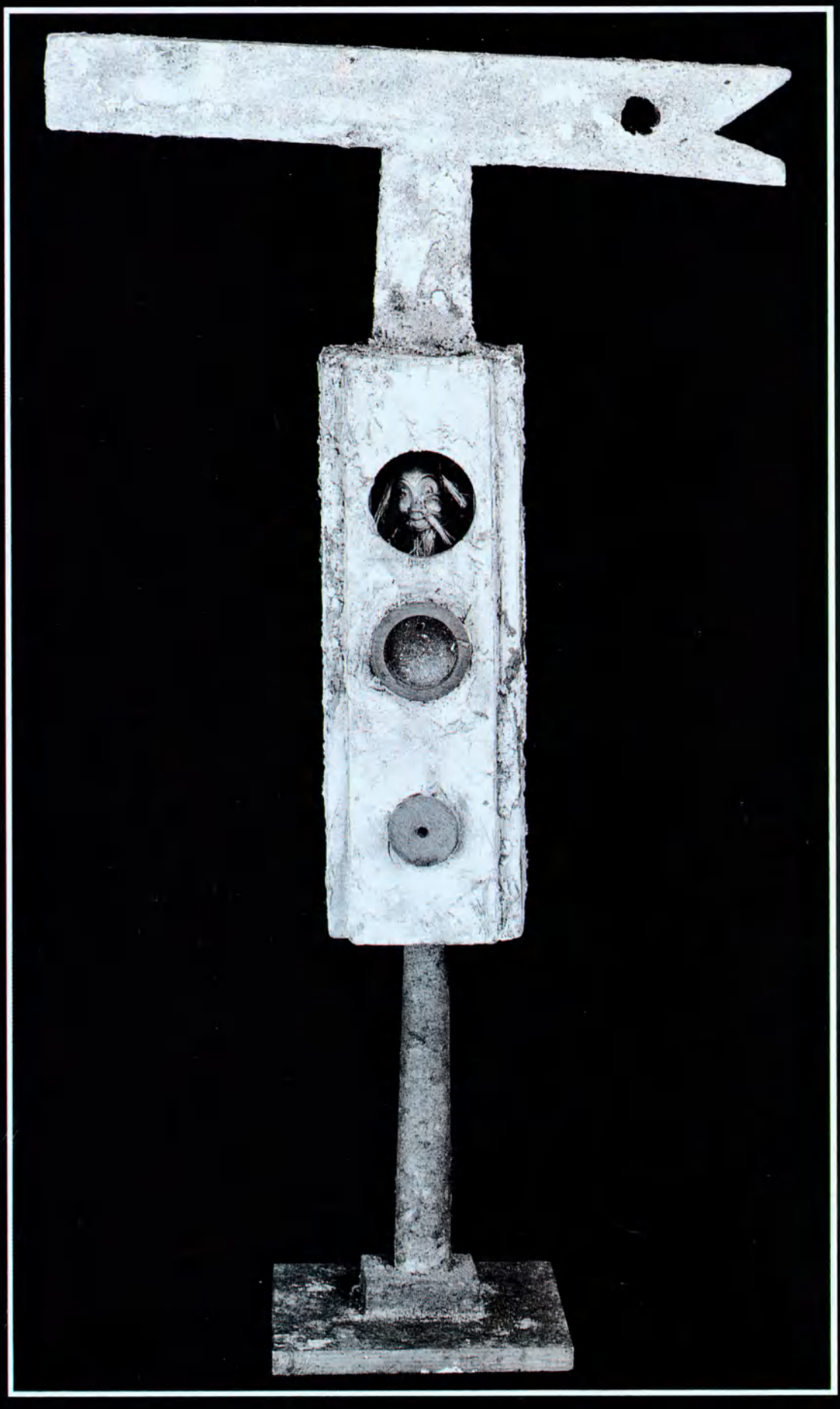
A TIME TO LOVE...

FRANCE: 22FF. - AUSTRALIA: AS7.90 - BELGIUM: BF160 - CANADA: CS5.75 - USA: $4.80 - SWITZERLAND: SF6.90 - NETHERLANDS: FI 10 - DENMARK: KR38

M 1205 - 9304 - 22.00 F

ENCOUNTERS

We invite readers to send us photographs to be considered for publication in this feature. Your photo should show a painting, a sculpture, piece of architecture or any other subject which seems to be an example of cross-fertilization between cultures. Alternatively, you could send us pictures of two works from different cultural backgrounds in which you see some striking connection or resemblance. Please add a short caption to all photographs.



TAO

1964, assemblage
(78 x 45 x 8 cm),
wood and paint with ash
by Wim de Haan
(1913-1967)

This work by a Dutch painter whose life was marked by his experience as a prisoner of war illustrates its creator's faith in humankind and his desire to reconcile anatagonisms. It is a tribute to Lao-tzu, traditionally considered to be the founder of Taoism. The literal meaning of the word tao is "way", and here the artist has inserted the face of the old Chinese sage in a signpost-shaped structure which contrives to suggest both a set of Western traffic signals and the wayside shrines containing sacred effigies which are found in the Orient. Humour blends with gravity in this work spanning two cultures.

Contents

APRIL 1993

4 *INTERVIEW*

Luc Ferry

talks to Bahgat Elnadi and Adel Rifaat

9

A TIME TO LOVE...

ANDRÉ BRINK
In search of a new language **10**

HENRI LOPES
The love-child **13**

TAHAR BEN JELLOUN
The plight of the playboy in early spring **16**

LUISA FUTORANSKY
Double portrait with a glass of wine **20**

J. M. G. LE CLÉZIO
From France, with love **22**

RENÉ DEPESTRE
The enchanted garden **31**

MAHMOUD HUSSEIN
Why Ulysses? **34**

NINA SIBAL
Miss Savitri and her shadow **37**

JEROME CHARYN
Behind the silver screen **40**

JORGE ENRIQUE ADOUM
Letter to a lovelorn girl **43**

46 ***UNESCO IN ACTION***
NEWSBRIEFS

48 ***RECENT RECORDS***
by Isabelle Leymarie

25

Greenwatch

47

***Commentary* by**
Federico Mayor

Cover:
Photo by Christian Zuber

The UNESCO COURIER

46th year — Published monthly in 32 languages and in Braille

"The Governments of the States parties to this Constitution on behalf of their peoples declare,
"that since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed . . .
"that a peace based exclusively upon the political and economic arrangements of governments would not be a peace which could secure the unanimous, lasting and sincere support of the peoples of the world, and that the peace must therefore be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind.
"For these reasons, the States parties . . . are agreed and determined to develop and to increase the means of communication between their peoples and to employ these means for the purposes of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other's lives. . . ."

EXTRACT FROM THE PREAMBLE TO THE CONSTITUTION OF UNESCO, LONDON, 16 NOVEMBER 1945

LUC FERRY

talks to Bahgat Elnadi and Adel Rifaat

Luc Ferry is a French philosopher, educator and essayist. In this interview he analyses the ideological background of current ecological thinking and, as a supporter of an approach to the environment based on democratic ethics, defines his conception of modern democracy in the light of historical experience. Among his published works in English are *Homo Æstheticus* and *Heidegger and Modernity* (University of Chicago Press). An English version of his latest book, *Le nouvel ordre écologique*, will also be published by the University of Chicago Press.

■ *Your latest book, Le Nouvel Ordre Écologique* ("The New Ecological Order") *has caused quite a stir. Is this because it attempts to make a distinction between "good" and "bad" ecology?*

—My book is about the debate within ecology, which is largely concerned with two fundamental philosophical problems. The first is the problem of the rights of nature: does nature have an intrinsic value, and if so, what kind of value? The second is the problem of the relationship between ecology and the modern world: to what extent does ecology question the basis of modern civilization? Very different attitudes to these two questions have evolved within ecology, particularly in the United States, Canada and the countries of northern Europe. This is what my book is about.

On the question of the rights of nature, there are three basic positions in ecology today. According to the first, nature has no rights and no intrinsic value and our only reason for protecting nature is because it constitutes our environment, that is to say the periphery of a figure having the human race at its centre. If we do not protect the environment, so the argument goes, we shall not be able to provide the human race with the conditions for a decent life; but the human race remains the sole possessor of rights or, as philosophers used to call it, the only "end in itself". In the United States this is known as the environmentalist position. It denies nature any legal status and rejects the idea that nature as such has any value.

The second position—that of the utilitarians—concedes that nature does possess some rights. It maintains that all creatures that are capable of feeling pain or pleasure should fall within the purview of the law. It is often forgotten that utilitarianism is not a selfish, individualistic doctrine but one whose aim is to produce the greatest good for the greatest number and the least possible suffering. If we accept this principle, say the utilitarians, there is no reason why animals should not be a subject of moral and legal concern. This position, which has considerable support in the United States and in Australia, provides the sanction for the animal liberation movement, as at present represented by Peter Singer, which has almost twenty million supporters in the Anglo-Saxon countries.

The third position is that upheld by those known in the United States as "deep ecologists", who believe that the order of priorities inherited from the humanist tradition should be reversed. Instead of putting the human species first, followed by animal, vegetable and mineral, the deep ecologists maintain that the biosphere or the Earth should come first, followed by living species in general, with human beings—if there are any left—in last place. According to this approach the human race is the most "antipathetic" species because

it alone is capable of turning against nature to the extent of destroying it; it is the species that is supremely antagonistic to nature, the species that causes pollution and is, in ecologists' eyes, the most open to criticism.

This viewpoint can be found, to a greater or lesser degree, in the writings of philosophers such as Hans Jonas in the United States and Michel Serres in France. The latter used it as the basis for the idea of a "natural contract"—a contract with nature, as against the kind of social contract between human beings that forms the basis of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen of 1789. It is also the position set out by some ecologists such as James Lovelock, who in his book *Gaia* depicts the Earth as a living organism, and the biosphere as the only true possessor of rights. It was with these currents of thought in mind that I subtitled my book *"L'arbre, l'animal et l'homme"* ("Trees, animals and man"), precisely the order of priorities on which a new ecological order is based.

These are, broadly speaking, the different points of view relating to nature as a possessor of rights. The position of the deep ecologists in particular poses a real problem: although in my opinion their point of view is both indefensible and dangerous, since it relegates the human race to second or even third place in the hierarchy of possessors of rights, it does raise the valid question, which is overlooked by the Cartesian tradition, as to why we attribute a value to nature independently of our own interests.

■ *So it is the third point of view that implies a radical critique of the modern world?*

—Yes, the linkage is both fairly simple and rather deep. For those who adopt the third viewpoint, which maintains that the rights of nature should take priority and that the true possessor of rights is the biosphere, the modern world is heading in quite the wrong direction. The deep ecologists often use the image of a car travelling the wrong way along a highway. It's no use slowing down, they say, the car must make a U-turn immediately. This image of the turn-around—a revolution in the etymological sense—gives some idea of the kind of revolution they want to see, rather conservative, reactionary even, since it means turning our backs on humanist civilization.

This critique of the modern age in the name of the rights of the biosphere has recently been made in films like *Dances with Wolves* and *The Big Blue*. It is an ideology that informs certain trends within the Green parties of northern Europe and in organizations like Greenpeace, which makes no bones about defending anti-humanist or "supra-humanist" values. Some people go so far as to say that human expansion should be limited, by force if necessary, to protect the environment.

■ *All right. But don't you think that to make this point by quoting Nazi texts, as you do in your book, is going too far?*

—I should like to explain why I did this. In my opinion people do not always understand what Nazism really was. Many people remember only the horror and barbarism of Nazism, and of course this is perfectly natural, but the reason why the Nazi programme held an attraction for 80 to 90 per cent of the German people was because initially it had something sufficiently profound and forceful about it for it to gain the support of great thinkers like Heidegger, Karl Schmitt, Alfred Bäumler and many others, including some 40 to 50 per cent of biologists and doctors at that time. There must have been something else, apart from the cult of the leader, violence and anti-Semitism. That something else was the German Romantic tradition, which expressed in a profound form extremely strong ecological preoccupations. Am I to blame if these ideas are found in Nazi laws adopted between 1933 and 1935 at Hitler's demand?

These laws took from the Romantics the idea that nature must be considered as possessing rights, as an entity to be protected, quite independently of human interests, the idea that we must rediscover a lost past, a state of nature as it was before the coming of civilization. Take, for example, the 1933 law on the protection of animals, an extremely detailed law that ran to almost 180 pages. It set forth the important principle, which has been adopted by today's deep ecologists, that animals should be protected for their own sake. This idea is hammered home again and again in the German text. Until then the law had at best only protected domestic animals from cruelty inflicted on them in public, in other words in the presence of human beings. In France the philanthropic and humanist *Loi Grammont* of 1850 had similar provisions, although it did not protect wild animals, and did not protect domestic animals from abuse inflicted in private. The Nazi law, for the first time in history—a Belgian law around the same time did the same thing—protected wild animals and prohibited cruelty to animals,

even in private. Clearly the aim was to protect natural creatures for their own sake and not insofar as they affect the interests or sensitivities of human beings.

■ *Can we conclude then that this is a coherent anti-humanist vision?*

—The fundamentalist version of deep ecology does indeed imply a radical critique of the humanist civilization inherited from the great declarations of the rights of man. The declaration of 1789 in France and that of 1776 in America are both manifestly anthropocentric. In both of them, nature is secondary, peripheral.

The German Romantic movement and Nazi ecology both criticized modern humanism in the name of a lost past, but it is also possible to criticize modern humanism in the name of a diametrically opposed ideal, that of a radiant future. I am thinking here of communist, Marxist societies or those advocating joint worker-management control, societies which have claimed to solve ecological problems by jointly or centrally planned industrial and technological development.

What is really interesting about contemporary ecology, as regards both Greenpeace and the so-called deep ecologists, is that it contains an explosive mixture of the two critiques. Those ecologists who think of themselves as revolutionaries mix together ideas which I would describe as those of the far right—criticism of universalism, modern science and cosmopolitanism in the name of local roots and the purity of the species—with extremely progressive ideas such as self-management, the use of the referendum, grass-roots initiatives, votes for foreigners, and so on.

Because of this mixture of ideas it is wrong to label these people "ecolo-fascists" or "green Khmers", as some French papers have been much too quick to do. True radicals are of the right and the left simultaneously. There is ample scope for a study of how European leftist ideas of the 1960s paradoxically borrowed from the differentialist themes that were those of the counter-revolutionary right.

■ *In your critique of certain currents within ecology, you take your bearings from the philosophy of human rights that was the main subject of your earlier theoretical works. Let us now widen our discussion and talk about human rights. Perhaps it would be a good idea to start by establishing to what extent human rights are a specifically modern concept.*

—Human rights are indeed different from other rights, such as those that existed in many ancient societies, or even from those proclaimed by different religions. When we talk about human rights we are not talking about a greater or lesser degree of tolerance but about a root-and-branch revolution that makes the individual the basic value, reversing the order of priorities as between human beings and everything that hitherto took precedence over them—nature, religion or the community.

By the Declaration of 1789, for the first time in history, rights are created for and by human beings. This represents a break with all earlier conceptions of law, which rooted law either in the natural order, as was the case in Greek and Roman Antiquity, or in a theological universe, as during the Middle Ages in Europe. The Declaration of 1789 initiated political humanism in the sense that from then on it would be human beings, acting in the light of their interests, their reason and their will, who enacted the law in those very specific institutions known as national parliaments.

But let's hang on to this totally new idea that human beings have rights because they are human beings, not because they belong to some national, ethnic, cultural or religious community, but by virtue of their membership of the human race, of humanity.

We might call this abstract humanism, because it regards humans as possessing rights irrespective of the specific community to which they belong. This, essentially, is what distinguishes the legacy of the Enlightenment as it is embodied in the Declaration of the Rights of Man of 1789 on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the counter-revolutionary Romantic tradition, which rejected this form of humanism in the name of the individual's specific allegiances and proclaimed that people belong to a community that enfolds and protects them and confers these rights on them. These are, obviously, fundamental issues.

■ *And the debate continues. Some people still interpret the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen in terms of a "right to be different".*

—This is not, of course, the correct interpretation. It is on the contrary a counter-revolutionary interpretation, which maintains that we have rights as creatures who "differ" one from another, and that this difference is mainly rooted in culture. This is

another very important idea. The Romantics tell us that human beings owe their humanity to culture, because it is culture that differentiates humans from animals, they are human by virtue of belonging to a cultural community, a nation for example.

The revolutionaries accept that culture distinguishes man from the animals, but they differ from the Romantics in their definition of culture. In their eyes culture is not an objective datum which is imposed on man rather like an extension of his original environment. It is not something obvious, not a kind of inheritance or a "second nature". Culture is what we build for ourselves. It is not the same kind of thing as tradition, it is something that is wrested away from nature. Culture ushers in the reign of freedom by wresting itself away from nature. With this distinction you have the whole of revolutionary ideology in a nutshell. As Rabaut Saint-Etienne said in a famous phrase, our history is not our code. Democratic culture is a culture built over and against whatever is there in the first place—nature in the strict sense, or tradition, which is a second nature.

■ *This is a key question. In the past half century, which has been dominated by the problems of decolonization, there has been much confusion between these two definitions of culture. For colonized societies it was vital to stress the identity of the group, the culture of the group, culture as an inheritance, as a way of standing up to the colonial power.*

—It is not hard to understand that the logic of the right to be different was appropriate in the first phase of the struggle, but later it came to be perverted. It was appropriate at first because it formed a basis for the defence of cultural entities whose survival was threatened by colonial imperialism. What was important at that stage was to defend something that already existed, an area of identification in which even traditions, even the most conservative allegiances, could be useful. There was a kind of instinct for survival at work here—something quite legitimate and understandable.

But since the colonies achieved independence, this emphasis on distinctive identities has led on to the present situation in which individuals are corralled into groups and these groups are corralled into what amount to cultural ghettos, pitted against one another. Basically, two historical perversions have fed upon each other: universalism was perverted into a colonialist, i.e. false, universalism, a European specificity which claimed to be universal, while the anti-colonial struggle, which was initially legitimate, eventually led to a new communalism, a new chauvinism, the effect of which has been to close off again the area of freedom partly opened by the victory over colonialism.

■ *Let's get back to the difference between the human and the animal. In the eighteenth century, the definition of modern humanism focused on this question.*

—Absolutely. For the Enlightenment philosophers who were behind the Declaration of 1789, the distinguishing characteristic of animals was that they were ruled by natural instincts. I think this distinction is still valid in zoological and scientific terms. Animals have no history. Animal societies—societies of ants, termites or bees—have not changed for thousands of years because their lives and those of the individual animals which constitute them are governed by inviolable rules, the rules of nature and instinct. The human race, on the other hand, is distinguished by its ability to transcend the rule of instinct, what the Enlightenment philosophers called freedom. By setting itself apart from nature, the human race entered a twofold process—the process of historical development and the process of universality.

Historical development means that when a living species ceases to be governed by the inviolable code of nature, it enters the realm of perfectibility. Education—teaching and learning—is a specifically human activity. Children have to learn life skills, whereas little tortoises and crocodiles are quite capable of managing on their own. Education may come from different sources—from parents, school or television—but it is indispensable. The great difference between humankind and the animals is that humankind, precisely because it is not governed by instinct, is capable of transmitting one generation's heritage to the next.

Even when animals have been trained by

human beings, they are incapable of teaching others what they have been taught. A circus animal will not give birth to another circus animal but to an animal that will return at once to the eternal laws of nature. The difference between human beings and animals lies in the historical process, and in the early days of ethnology this posed a fundamental problem: how to classify societies that were labelled as "primitive" or "savage", since they seemed to have no history? These societies seemed to be ruled by something that resembled nature—tradition. In my opinion this problem remained unsolved until Lévi-Strauss and contemporary Marxist anthropology appeared on the scene.

Universalism was the second consequence of humankind's distancing itself from nature. By wresting themselves free from their specific situation, whether cultural, national, linguistic or biological—the fact of being a man or a woman—human beings can enter the sphere of universality, in other words they can familiarize themselves with other cultures, learn other languages, discover other forms of art or politics than their own. In so doing they recognize other human beings, no matter what culture they belong to, as their fellows, thereby discovering their common humanity. The moment we put behind us the specific situation from which we set out is the moment when we attain humanity and move from the particular to the general. Modern ethics, the ethics of the French Revolution and the Enlightenment, favours choosing the universal by overcoming the dead weight of one's specific initial situation.

■ *Why is modern democracy unimaginable without this attempt to distance ourselves from nature and tradition and accede to the universal?*

—Well, if you base democracy on discussion, if you think that in a democracy the law should originate in debate founded on rational argument rather than on a scriptural authority or a patriarchal tradition, you must realize the full implications of this. Rational argument presupposes the ability of those who take part in it to set aside their initial positions. For example, if they talk about abortion purely and simply from their points of view as women or men, Catholics or Muslims, they will never reach agreement: there's no such thing as a universally valid argument. If you want to legislate on racism, you can't do it exclusively as a Black or an Arab or a Jew, you have to be able to put your case as a human being. At the root of everything that is worthwhile in democracy is the principle of liberty, which means disregarding the specific positions that are one's starting point and acceding to the universal through the use of reason.

■ *Let's turn to democracy and its internal contradictions, which each country has ultimately to resolve in its own way. Let's start with the age-old debate about the two kinds of rights, rights as freedoms and rights as entitlements.*

—The former, which are sometimes called "formal" rights, are by and large those of the Declaration of 1789—freedom of opinion, equality before the law, freedom of movement, the right to own property. They take us back to the problems connected with the limitations of state power. Limiting the powers of the state is a central notion, the basis of the tradition of political liberalism. At the time of the French Revolution, there was a need to impose limits on absolutism: all the rights of 1789 are limits on the legitimate competence of the state. The right to own property and the right to freedom of opinion mean that the state has no right to take away your property without good reason and no right to impose an ideology or a religion upon you. The right to security of the person prohibits the state from sentencing a person without trial, so these rights are primarily political principles limiting state intervention rather than simple principles of tolerance.

The other type of rights—entitlements or "social" rights—made their appearance around the middle of the nineteenth century. They relate to a totally different set of problems, since they call for increased state intervention, particularly in social and economic life. If you maintain that the citizens of a state have the right to work, it follows that the state must assume the responsibility of providing them with work, which means directing the economy to some extent. Here the difference between the two types of rights

CONTINUED PAGE 49

Ten writers look at love

In a sense the theme of the present issue has dictated the form of its treatment—giving carte blanche to a number of writers from different parts of the world.

We have long wanted to publish an issue devoted to the subject of love as it is experienced in the modern world. We thought about it, asked around, tried first one angle, then another and yet another. But the theme proved to be particularly elusive: the authors we approached either backed off or, if they accepted, turned in pieces far different from what we had expected. It became clear that love could not be treated conventionally like any ordinary topic, with a structured list of contents and following predictable lines of enquiry. We finally came to the conclusion that it not only needed but deserved special treatment, a different approach.

We decided to ask ten different writers a single question—what do you want to say about love today?—and let them get on with it, giving them an entirely free hand.

The result was a set of contributions that were totally different from anything we could have imagined at the start, and went far beyond what we might have hoped for. Thanks to their talent, intuition and experience, the ten authors, given their head, had managed, in a series of lucid, inspired improvisations that caught the right notes to render the tremulous music of loving today.

We received pieces on the power of the love that scoffs at barriers of class, race and frontiers (André Brink) or that comes to terms with racial intermingling and finds a universal sense (Henri Lopes); the magic of a love that exorcises the alienation of the exile (J.M.G. Le Clézio) or that ultimately becomes one with the love of life itself (Luisa Futoransky); the fullness of a love to which the whole being is committed, body and soul (René Depestre); the paradox of love whereby the philanderer, always in pursuit of his prey and never tied down, yet finds himself less free than ever (Tahar Ben Jelloun); the ambiguous myths of love, reinvented by Hollywood as an antidote to the everyday world (Jerome Charyn); love as a metaphor for the submission of a humble Indian librarian to a career-conscious woman politician (Nina Sibal); love breaking free of childhood dreams, trying in vain to enter the world of the present (Mahmoud Hussein); and lastly, love abandoning the pretence of being everlasting, accepting that it is transient and bounded by time (Jorge Enrique Adoum).

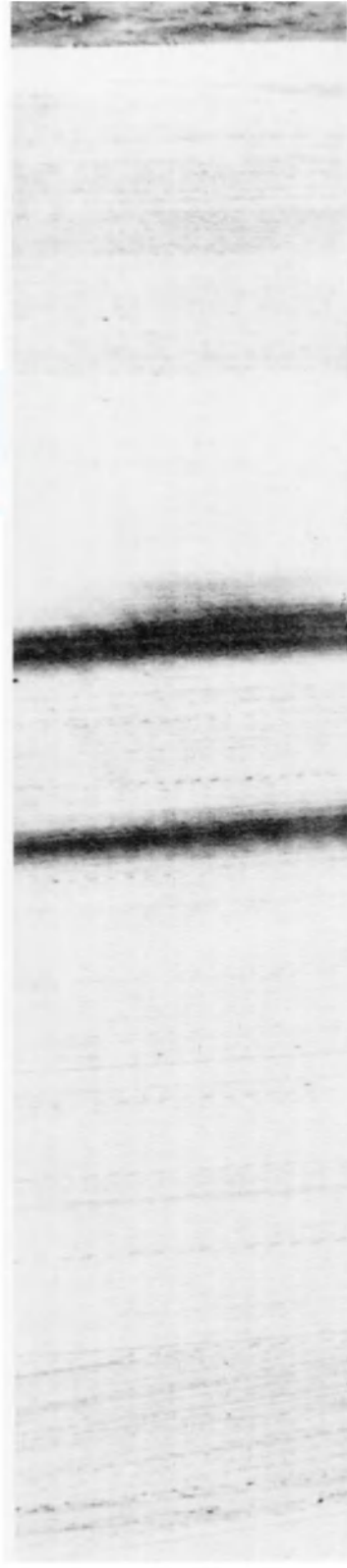
We were still left with a difficult problem: whether to publish everything as it stood, even things that seemed to some of us inappropriate or extreme, even what was expressed in terms that the *Courier* could not endorse.

The answer was, and could only be, yes. Not only because it was the price to pay for freedom of expression, but also because that freedom had succeeded where our own concern with planning had failed. The result is the present issue.

The Editors ■ **9**

André Brink

In search of a new language



'COULD you write a simple love story if you wished?"

It was in the mid-1980s, in the darkest time of the apartheid era, and the question was asked by a woman journalist in France. She was very serious. I, too, took it seriously. So seriously, in fact, that in due course I wrote a whole novel—*States of Emergency*—to attempt an answer to her question. I am still not sure what the answer was: novels tend not to be unifocal. A main character in the book, a man who tries to write a book to find out whether he can write a book about love while living in a society disrupted and maimed by apartheid, abandons the writing of his book, which tends to suggest that such an endeavour is impossible. Yet my own novel is there—which tends to suggest the opposite.

The point is not the answer that was attempted. The point is that such a question was asked—in a sense *had* to be asked—at all. And that it was so serious. There cannot, surely, be many societies in our world in which it would be making the kind of sense it does in South Africa. Even before an answer was attempted the question itself suggested something deeply disturbing: about writing; about the society in which it is done; and about love.

In a way, of course, it is linked to Brecht's familiar question about the kind of society in which one cannot write about trees, for fear of being silent about so many other things. "Other things" being, primarily, politics. (Had Brecht lived a few decades later, he might not have posed his question: writing about trees today *is* one of the most political acts imaginable. This in itself should be reason to pause.)

The problem about this kind of reasoning lies in its assumptions about the "nature" of trees, and of love, and of politics.

In the traditional free democracies of the West—none of which can qualify as "truly" democratic or free without facing some deeply embarrassing questions—politics is conceived of as some ideological system "out there", a collection of abstractions ("capitalism", "free market", "Marxism", "oppression", "freedom of speech", "human rights", representative government", "electoral system", "checks and balances" . . .); and writing a political novel becomes a form of campaigning, carrying a torch, brandishing a slogan, leaving the domain of the private to engage in public debate or action. In South Africa—suffering under the inhuman burden of apartheid, or taking its first hesitant steps towards a different and still largely unmapped future—politics forms an integral part of the real and daily experience, whether individual or collective. And writing about it subverts the easy traditional distinction between private and public. In a sense the most private experience of all—the act of love between two persons—becomes unsettlingly public in its implications when it is inserted into the framework of the abnormal society created and sustained by apartheid. (And even today, with much of the legal substructure of apartheid being dismantled, the mentality, the mind-set, of apartheid—creating a sense of superiority in some, and a sense of being the perpetual victims in others—remains in place.)

❤

THE THREATENING HEART

When I wrote *Looking on Darkness* in the early 1970s, tracing the fatal relationship between a "coloured" actor and a young white woman, it became the first Afrikaans novel to be banned in South Africa; and apart from "threatening the security of the state" and "blasphemy" the main reason advanced for the ban was "pornography". Because in an abnormal society love itself could not be allowed a normal place; and because the love of two people forced by the distorted reasoning of apartheid into two different racial "categories" became, through its very existence, an

THE REALM OF LOVE

Love gives naught but itself and takes naught but from itself.
Love possesses not nor would it be possessed;
For love is sufficient unto love.

Khalil Gibran
(1883-1931) Lebanese writer
(*The Prophet*, Heinemann, London, 1974)

interrogation of—an implicit attack on—the foundations of the state. There simply is no longer any line of demarcation between "private" and "public", between "love" and "politics".

The use of the term "pornography", with "obscenity" as its synonym, is also significant. Not only *this* manifestation of love (across the colour bar) is regarded as repugnant, offensive and dangerous, but love itself: in a society which finds its whole raison d'être in separateness, love becomes a real threat to hegemony. It is *inevitably* obscene: off-scene, against-the-grain, against everything admitted as acceptable. And to brand it pornographic reveals more of the mentality behind the accusation than of the experience or its written record.

"The French realize that love is a form of metaphysical enquiry," Lawrence Durrell said in an interview many years ago (which I used as an epigraph to an early novel, *The Ambassador*, which was also termed pornographic by the establishment because, this time, it revealed a human frailty in an official representative of the South African regime). "The English," added Durrell, "think it has something to do with the plumbing." Few remarks illustrate quite so effectively the distortions of the experience of love by a system which is threatened by it on all fronts.

Which brings us back to the link between the private (love) and the public (politics).

In every novel I have written, in one way or another the point of departure has been the inescapable solitude of the individual and the miracle of those fleeting "instants in the wind" in which one *does* reach and touch another. I can think of no other experience in which both the tragedy and the miracle of otherness is celebrated so profoundly as the acknowledgement of love. And living and writing in South Africa has almost inevitably involved me in the *political* dimension of otherness expressed in, and by, apartheid. Once again the transition from personal to public comes natural to the writer who can use it with its full metaphoric weight. (There is one crucial difference between the two experiences, of course, and this in itself is important: the solitude of the individual cannot—except in those excruciatingly beautiful and fleeting instants—be either avoided or changed: apartheid *can*. This very difference, with its clear Camusian overtones, illuminates both dimensions.)

A COMMON CELEBRATION

Umberto Eco has wittily and incisively demonstrated the dilemma of the postmodernist writer in his remarks on the impossibility of saying to a woman "I love you madly", knowing that Barbara Cartland has already (over)used the phrase—which forces him to resort to irony. One cannot be flippant about the relation between love and politics in South Africa; yet the situation reveals the same need for a different kind of approach and a mistrust of realism. The poet Willie Kgotsisile once explained that if he wants to write a poem about the moon or about love there is no need for him to dwell on his suffering under apartheid or in exile: if he chooses the right words, he said, all the experience of his whole life will go into his evocation of the moon or his declaration of love.

What South Africa needs at the moment is, above all, perhaps, a new language of love. It is relevant even on the practical level of exiles returning home to find their relationships with loved ones—wives, husbands, lovers, children, parents, family, friends—strained to breaking point by the need to reorientate and redefine their lives within a changing context. (For many, the very agony of exile provided—ironically, terribly—the framework for a relationship which now has to be adapted to the humdrum urgent needs of finding a job, choosing a school for the children, settling in a new community, learning patience after that euphoric moment of watching Nelson Mandela leave his prison.)

This may go some way towards defining some possibilities of a "role" for the writer (always a notion fraught with danger!) in a changing South Africa. Apartheid has insisted on what keeps people *apart:* the differences, the alterities, the notions of groups and cultures and ethnicities. The writer takes as a point of departure that which he or she has in *common* with others—the love, the joy, the hate, the suspicion, the fear, the ambition, the trust, the faith, the hope. Apartheid has inscribed inequalities into our daily lives: the oppression of women, the degradation of those not marked by a white skin. The writer can devise the language to break down these inequalities and transcend differences as a destructive experience. This would truly have to be a language of love, and a celebration of love: an acknowledgement of love, not as pornographic or obscene or untrustworthy or insidious, but as the dangerous, profound and illuminating meeting of self and other.

Only when this happens—when love is once again "at home" in the country, returned from the exile apartheid has imposed on it, can South Africa once again join the human family.

ANDRÉ BRINK,
South African writer. Among his recent published works is *An Act of Terror* (Minerva Books, London, 1992).

Henri Lopes

The love-child

I am of mixed parentage, a "métis".

Nowadays, it is a fashionable thing to be.

I can remember a childhood quarrel I once had. I knew that both right and reason were on my side. Having run out of arguments, my "thoroughbred" opponent retorted with a sneer that I was a *mwana makangu*, a "love-child". In other words I was illegitimate, a bastard.

I was dumbfounded. Surely, I thought, my father and mother were united by the bonds of matrimony. My mother explained that she and my father were born out of wedlock. Her identity card, like my father's, bore the words "father unknown". After I had told her what had happened, she smiled, patted my head and told me not to be so upset. It was all nonsense: the important thing was not to know where we came from but where we were going.

Later on, I learnt that when the family trees of love-children and ordinary children alike, whether white, black, yellow, red, coffee-coloured, albinos or pygmies, are traced back, they apparently all spring from a common pair of ancestors, who some people call Adam and Eve and others monkeys, male and female, though there are still people who have their doubts.

Later still, I came to understand that, in the colonial setting, some people looked upon us as being an embarrassment and others as a threat.

From the books I read, I finally realized that the term "love-child", though proffered as an insult, was actually a mark of nobility.

Books taught me that romance cannot be contained within the framework of marriage, and that this has been true from the time of Tristan and Iseult, through Madame Bovary, right up to Djamilia[1] and *L'Amant*.[2]

IRRESISTIBLE PASSION

My first example is that of Tristan, a Knight of the Round Table, who is charged with escorting Iseult, the betrothed of his uncle King Mark, and who, inadvertently or in a moment of madness, shares with her a magic potion that kindles in them an irresistible passion. In short, it is the story of a man who carries off a bride-to-be on the eve of her wedding in order to save her from the hell of a loveless marriage.

My second example is that of the children of two rival families, the Montagues and Capulets, who fall in love and are married in secret. But Romeo has killed a Capulet and has to go into exile. In order to escape a forced marriage, Juliet takes a sleeping draught. Romeo thinks she is dead and kills himself. When Juliet awakes, she too kills herself. They are model lovers, but they defy the law and betray their kinsfolk.

In both these examples, love means passion, a violent outburst whose flames destroy all sense of reason. The two protagonists prefer death to the mediocrity of everyday life.

In Apollinaire's poem *Lorelei*, the legendary siren of the river Rhine sings:

My love has left for a far-off land
Let me die, for I have nothing left to love.

Thinking she sees her lover coming, she leans out over the water, stumbles and falls in. Death is the only fitting punishment for the unseemly love of a sorceress.

Madame Bovary's love is that of a woman taken in adultery. The novel's heroine dies for her sins and its author was hauled before the courts for going beyond the bounds of decency and morality.

As the French poet Louis Aragon[3] put it, love is suffering:

My lovely love, my dearest love, heart-rending love

THE TEST

The love of one human being for another is perhaps the hardest test for any of us, the highest expression of ourselves, the master-work for which all other works are but the preparation.

Rainer Maria Rilke
(1875-1926) Austrian writer.
From *Briefe an einen jungen Dichter (Letters to a young poet)*

Above, glass painting by the Senegalese artist Gora M'Bengue. Below right, illustration to Flaubert's novel *Madame Bovary* by Pierre Brissaud (early 20th century).

I bear you within me like a wounded bird
....
There is no such thing as happiness in love"
And yet....

In *Mamadou and Binéta*, our school reading primer, I read over and over again the adventures of Samba who, by killing the "Guinarou", rid his country, which sounded much like my own village, of a giant crocodile that had to be appeased by sacrificing young maidens to it.

The King came up to Samba and said to him:
"You, stranger, have killed the giant crocodile. You are the bravest of the brave. Thanks to you, we shall always have fresh water. What are your desires? I shall grant your every wish."

Samba had been told how the three maidens had been brought to the crocodile and how the King's daughter had shown no sign of fear.

He then spoke up and said: "Samba has only one thing to ask of His Majesty: the brave Samba seeks the hand of the King's daughter in marriage."

And so it came to pass. Samba had many children with his wife, and they were all as brave as their father and their mother.

I was captivated by this story, which had been adapted from a Fulbe Torodo legend. Since then, I have realized that various versions of this same story exist the world over in the folk memory, constructed on the same pattern, with their mixture of magic, epic deeds and "courtly" love. Courtly love is the thread that runs through them and the end that crowns them. In this tale, unlike the earlier examples I have quoted, love is not an all-consuming, outlawed passion but is part and parcel of the order of things and of society. It is the prize awarded to the conquering heroes through whose exploits society can continue to live in the peace of the traditional order. Marriage should be the beginning of the love story. In fact, it leads into the end of the tale, which always goes: "they were married and lived happily ever after, and had lots of children."

Despite that, it is a long time since I felt ashamed at being a *mwana makangu*, a love-child.

Those who see beyond the confines of the family circle are by nature allergic to the us-and-them mentality, and yet I have to ask myself whether I am not prompted by the reflexes of that mentality when I rule that the people who live on the other side of the river, who do not speak the same language as me, who worship a different god, whose skin colour, hair texture or shape of nose are different from mine, are not my fellow human beings but are barbarians, invaders and enemies, the offspring of some other species.

Minds capable of being astonished that there can actually be people like Montesquieu's Persians are likely to be highly responsive to the ideas of racism and xenophobia.

❤ STRONGER THAN FRONTIERS

Can there be said to be ideas about love that bear the stamp of particular civilizations? The codes people use to declare and show their love do quite likely vary from one society to another or from one group or community to another. Some take a rather discreet form and are couched in figurative language, while others are more to the point, but in all cases it is necessary to know the proper form to follow, or else the suitor's advances are liable to be spurned. A hint of emotion and a touch of poetry are always necessary in such preliminaries.

If emotion makes the suitor stutter and stammer, he can always try singing. The first two words that people listening to Congolese music learn are *bolingo* and *motéma*, love and heart. If the beloved is not won over by singing, she can be invited to dance. All folk dances the world over tell

HENRI LOPES,
Congolese writer. Among his works published in English is *Tribaliks: Contemporary Congolese Stories* (Heinemann, London, 1987).

Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, as depicted by the Austrian painter Karl Ludwig Prinz (early twentieth century).

a tale of seduction. The male does his courtship display and the maiden starts by refusing.

Ways of loving have no doubt evolved throughout history, especially as regards the relationship between lovers. Love is a conquest in which nothing can ever be taken for granted, but ever since the beginnings of time the folk memory has been a treasury of famous songs telling of the power of love that bestrode national borders and divisions of religion and race.

Love has nothing to do with the matchmaking between families and clans to which generations of young people were subjected so as to preserve the "purity" of tribes and the cohesion of social classes. Some societies have been more clearsighted and have drawn practical conclusions from this: in their wisdom, they have continued to practise polygamy, which is a way of paying lip service to propriety while offering scope for passion. In their first marriage, men yield to the law of the group and found a family with a first wife (a "queen mother"?) who ensures the continued survival of the group. But immediately after that, they are allowed the possibility of having a favourite among their other wives, a wife for whose heart and body they long with a thirst that cannot be quenched in a thousand and one nights or days or even years. Incidentally, those societies would have been even wiser had they thought of combining polygamy and polyandry. But let us not judge the past with the eyes and values of the present.

No, I am no longer ashamed of being a love-child.

I am indeed eternally grateful for that moment of passion enjoyed by an unknown grandfather and a grandmother who was later to become the wise woman of our tribe. As a result of their temerity in flouting the accepted rules, I have since the cradle held this truth, that humankind is one, to be self-evident.

When a love like theirs is sparked off, it brings to light affinities and sensibilities that transcend their overt differences. It is love at first sight, but stormy times lie ahead when two human beings, in the face of all the hostility of family, society and religion, proclaim that artificial boundaries are nonsense and revel in the intermingling of blood with blood. It is through this cross-fertilization that the culture of the colonial subject colonizes that of the colonial master and that the concept of humankind supersedes that of race.

Love means elective affinities asserting themselves over the solidarity of the group.

LIGHT IN DARKNESS

Although the mixed offspring of these love affairs have to contend with difficulties and crises in coming to terms with life, they are the tender shoots that will later burst into flower, the living image of men and women of the future.

There may be something significant in the fact that the love extolled by Aragon, Eluard, Neruda or Nicolás Guillén is never consummated in a communal wedding night, between militants draped in the Red Flag and lying on a Stakhanovite camp bed. Aragon sings of the love of the Arab sovereign Boabdil, the *Fou d'Elsa*, and Eluard of his love for Nusch, a love that gives him the strength to believe even in the darkest hour of the night:

Loving love. The truth is, the light blinds me. I keep enough of it within me to watch over the night, all night, every night.

All virgins are different. I always dream of virgins.[4]

When the mob, in the name of morality and God, wants to stone to death the woman taken in adultery, Christ stays the hand of the Pharisees and calls on him among them who is without sin to cast the first stone.

Perhaps it is Jorge Amado who, in almost all of his novels, has best expressed this deep-seated link between love and the cominingling of races, both of which are vectors of universal values. Such commingling, however, should not be taken as a gift of the gods, but should be regarded as a heritage, a rich lode to be mined, an opening of the way to a new life that calls for vigilance, the highest of standards and a readiness to act at all times.

1. Chingiz Aitmatov, *Djamilia.*
2. Marguerite Duras, *L'Amant.*
3. Louis Aragon, *La Diane française,* Seghers publishers, Paris.
4. Paul Eluard, *Les dessous d'une vie* ou *La pyramide humaine.*

Tahar Ben Jelloun

The plight of the playboy in early spring

BODY AND SOUL

All at once we were madly, clumsily, shamelessly, agonizingly in love with each other; hopelessly, I should add, because that frenzy of mutual possession might have been assuaged only by our actually imbibing and assimilating every particle of each other's soul and flesh.

Vladimir Nabokov
(1899-1977) Russian-born American writer.
From *Lolita*, Vintage Books, Random House, Inc., New York, 1989.

At the first sign of spring, when the early flowers timidly open, as soon as the weather starts to get warmer and the body feels the first tender touch of the sun, the women of Paris take to the streets. Not to demonstrate: unconstrained, free from false modesty, intelligent yet with a hint of fragility overcome, they no longer need vindictive speeches and slogans. They have already won the battle, not only in Parliament but in the public mind. They are there to show themselves off, proud just to be there, free, in the vanguard of fashion, and with an appetite that is intimidating or at the least disconcerting to even the most determined womanizer.

Paris, more than any other European capital, is their realm, their territory, the stamping ground of all their desires. The light in this city, particularly at certain special times of day, enhances not only their beauty but also—and this does not come amiss—their mystery. Tall or petite, dark or fair, rich or poor, Parisians by birth or by adoption, they pass by, self-assured, the look in their eyes hinting—to those who know the language—of love and sorrow. They may not be dominating but they are not averse to becoming so when their intelligence is affronted.

When a man experiences this he starts feeling scared. He is convinced that late twentieth-century women are bent on his destruction. In fact he is not thinking of his own destruction but of that of all men whose love for women has gradually become a weakness that puts them severely to the test nearly every day. The friend in whom he confides is happy to learn he is not the only one waging a combat that is lost from the start. The only serious problem in his life is not suicide or death but how to go about loving women. He is completely at a loss to understand the grammar of women's language—a language that is often foreign to him—but he obstinately persists in his quest.

The playboy's problem is learning to adapt. The times are changing fast; manners change and women are not becoming any less demanding He thought for a while that the threat of Aids

Senegalese glass painting (artist unknown).

would cool his ardour, or at least slow down his scoring rate. Now, with a packet of condoms in his pocket he feels more sure of himself and ready for anything. He knows women are uncompromising about this, something that often plays havoc with his libido. Love-making loses some of its charm when the question of protection crops up; conversation switches tone from beauty to fear, distress and death, and the excitement of the first time together is foregone while the necessary precautions are worked out. Nevertheless, women have lost none of their arrogance, which itself has something erotic about it. Acutely aware of this, women wage a constant battle to ensure that love takes precedence over sexual acrobatics. Our playboy took a long time to understand this.

❤

DREAMS OF FAIR WOMEN

Living with a beautiful métisse, he follows Stendhal's advice not to see too much of his beloved and to drink champagne in agreeable company. He suspects women to be fickle, poor fellow, but does not always keep the right company. For the time being he would rather dream and is even in danger of becoming imprisoned in his dreams. He knows dreaming is pleasant but forgets it is also a trap.

He sees her walking unhurriedly towards him, caught in a ray of sunshine, tall, taller than himself, wearing a very tight, short black skirt—on her it looks good because she has fantastic legs. She walks with the measured but basically natural elegance of someone out strolling for the pleasure of it. Her jacket fits closely at the waist, a waist he can encircle with his two hands. He runs his fingers through her tousled hair. Beneath her jacket of a discreet red, her breasts hang free. Around her neck and over her shoulders she is wearing a huge cashmere scarf; when she throws it back it blows a puff of wind into the gawping eyes of the men. She walks on by without seeing him and he names her Perfidy, the name of a perfume he dreams one day of inventing. There is nothing nasty or even perverse in the name, just a sly play on words. As she moves away he looks at her from behind, a perfect picture in her short skirt, and of course undresses her. She slaps him and he falls at her feet. She pushes him away. He gets to his feet, cursing himself as usual for what he has done. Looking in the mirror he sees she has scratched him and finds a drop of blood on his finger. He sucks it and bursts out laughing.

The woman who has just sat down at the table opposite is a voluptuous creature with big dark eyes and the expression of a runaway tragedienne, pouting lips and a full bosom. She gazes into the distance as she drinks her tea and he pretends to himself she is not there. She goes to the telephone and he strains to hear what she is saying. What he hears is unreassuring. She speaks with an Italian accent and is vowing revenge on someone. The words are a mixture of tough and tender: "I love you, my darling, but if I catch

Rudolph Valentino, one of the first great international film stars, with Wilma Banky on the poster for *The Son of the Sheik* (1926), directed by George Fitzmaurice.

you at it once more I'll tear you limb from limb. . . ." When she comes back he sees she is crying, eye shadow running down her cheeks. She reminds him of an old girlfriend who only blossomed out when they had a big scene. Her name is Marphysa. He is afraid she will move over to his table as he feels she is quite capable of doing. He hastens to pay his bill and scuttles out of the café.

This one is eighteen, has a goddess's name and only goes for men of forty. She rings his doorbell and asks for a light. He notices her impressively full, firm breasts, her disturbing grey-green eyes and her hair, worn in Louise Brooks pageboy style, that he feels a sudden desire to stroke. He tells himself she's not the sort to let herself be talked into things, she is more in need of love, a romance with moments of tension, surprises and upsets. He doesn't feel up to involvement in such a romance. He asks her in for a cup of tea. She asks a lot of questions that he answers as best he can. She asks if he would like to go to the theatre with her. He detests the theatre but smiles and says yes. He tries to persuade her to go to the cinema instead but she has seen all the films he was meaning to see. The thought that one day she will let him touch her lips with his gives him the shivers. He looks at her lips. They are a very bright red and her eyes are laughing all the time. He names her Anastasia and he knows she means to destroy him, he is expecting it and getting ready for it. He knows he is for the slaughter but doesn't know how or where it will happen.

❤

ALL-TIME LOSERS

He calls the friend in whom he confides and the friend confirms his general impression: "I feel the same way. My intuition tells me it's going to be awful. Our only hope is to pray for rain: it's spring that gives them these dreadful ideas. It's only to be expected: beauty needs to breathe, to commit a few offences, and we are marked down as the perfect victims. You tell me about your Anastasia but I just had a narrow escape from a knife-thrower! Ruthless, merciless! Georges was hit on the head with a Coke bottle—swept into his face as his girlfriend threw her scarf over her shoulder. We're goners and it's just as well we know it. I thought I was going to turn Mirabelle—still in high school—into one of those brainy creatures with generous mouths who could be the talk of the town! It turned out she already had two lovers!"

Models often meet other people in the rag trade upstairs at the Café de Flore and even have photo sessions there. The women change clothes in full view of the customers. There is no voyeurism involved since there aren't any mysteries or secrets any more. Actresses arrange to meet people there. Without makeup and in ordinary clothes they often pass unnoticed. The Flore is not a place for striking up acquaintances but for cultivating those made elsewhere. Our man feels safe here. The girls go by, take their seats, chat, dress and undress, dance and then disappear.

He likes thinking back to that Brazilian actress who came to Paris for three weeks to make a film. The time he spent with her was one of total insecurity. Their love-making was sublime. The first time she came to his door, by mistake, she hesitated on the doorstep then, with an accent that sent him into a spin, said: "Aren't you Skolawsky? Can I use your phone?" She put down her bag, took off her coat and lit a cigarette as she dialled the number. He took in her perfect figure, her mane of hair, her wide, graceful gestures. The number did not answer.

"Could I have a glass of water? I get thirsty when there's no-one there."

"Wouldn't you rather have a glass of white wine?"

"No, we don't know each other well enough to drink wine together."

"We've got to start sometime. . . ."

"When I feel like it, not before."

As she was leaving she said, "See you soon".

Don Juan and the quest for the absolute

by Zeina Arida

DON JUAN first saw the light of day in 1630, when Baroque theatre was in full flower and behind the rigid morality of Spanish society there lurked a sometimes unbridled libertinism. In *El burlador de Sevilla* (The seducer of Seville), Tirso de Molina created the character and traced the outlines of his destiny. The hero of this drama, the irresistible womanizer, took on a life of his own that has lasted nearly four centuries, going on from one literary incarnation to another, from author to author, as if belonging to all and to none.

A born libertine, Don Juan moves from one amorous adventure to another, exploiting his social rank to deceive women. Living only for the moment, he opts for time rather than eternity, for change rather than immutability. In this world of the fleeting instant, libertinism in love is a natural consequence of the instability of all things: any man who follows the devices and desires of his heart becomes inconstant in love. Inconstancy, the refusal to worship at the shrine of the one and only love, becomes a duty. Not only does Don Juan feel no attachment to any woman, the attachment felt by any woman for him would be a burden to him. Faithfulness to beauty is the only form of fidelity possible in love.

Tormented and forever unsatisfied, Don Juan is at the same time an angst-ridden figure. Some would have it that he is not seeking love or tenderness but trying to assuage a desire that is impossible to satisfy and hence is constantly rekindled. His desires come up against the limitations of sated lust, and the whole world becomes the playground for his amorous propensities. As Molière's *Dom Juan* puts it, "I would there were other worlds so I could extend to them my amorous conquests." The seducer needs obstacles. Seduction means overcoming obstacles: the harder the woman is to get, the more desirable she is. It thus comes about that, in Pascal's words, he prefers the combat to the victory. Once his victim surrenders, he loses interest and spurns her.

In nineteenth-century Romanticism, the wanton, cynical libertine was to give way to the seeker after the *Ewig-Weibliche*, the Eternal Feminine, the sister-soul on whom his heart will be set. Behind the staggering record of the seducer's winning streak—the "thousand and three" women of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*—there lies a quest for the absolute. Don Juan becomes a Faust-figure, and his infidelity, according to Alfred de Musset, becomes "a craving for the infinite in the pleasure of the senses".

Inconstant though he may be, he is nevertheless always sincere. In each instance he is in love, and for the short moment he loves a woman she becomes the one and only, until he moves on to the next. Don Juan does not betray love, love always eludes him, perhaps because he has never encountered the *amour fou* so dear to André Breton.

Of Don Juan's many attributes, it is to that of the hungry hunter, the pleasure-seeker, that the modern age is most drawn. Some writers, such as Henry de Montherlant, have imagined him in disillusioned old age, pushing the depiction to the limits of caricature: "The Don Juans of old were damned souls; this one is sex-obsessed, and thus very much of our time." ❤

ZEINA ARIDA,
of Lebanon, is preparing a thesis on women in the plays of Henry de Montherlant.

Three days later she was back, with a bottle of champagne, just like in the movies. The first time they made love they did it standing up, like in the movies. She said: "You're not French, you must be a white-skinned African." He said: "No, I'm a Parisian."

Love as in a novel, a film, an old song, love like a misty, dewy morning, bashful as a crime of passion, crazy like a mirror that has forgotten how to reflect, in Paris love sometimes wears the face of pain, of disconsolate grief, he told himself as he thought of all those women, those lovely, willing, wanton, deadly women, who stroll beside the Seine and will be sleeping alone tonight. He starts to reckon up, to work out the statistics, then realizes that at the very moment he is working them out a woman is having the orgasm of her life, so strong and wild she loses control and strangles her lover.

When she makes love she closes her eyes and speaks a mixture of Portuguese and Spanish. She asks him to talk to her in Arabic, saying: "That's how you make love in Paris, in several languages." When the film was completed she stayed on a few days, shutting herself up with him in a small hotel, offering herself up entirely to him. She cut off a lock of his hair, like a teenager, stuck it on a postcard and sent it to him with the message: "Only in Paris do I have orgasms that make me pass out. You may be partly responsible, but get it into your head that it's the polluted Paris air that really turns me on."

He was a long time getting over that strictly sexual affair. Sitting now at an outdoor café table, he watches, aloof, as the girls go by. They are all different, gathered in from distant climes. The African girls he admires for their firm breasts, their outspokenness, forwardness and feistiness, the Asians for their willowy figures. He knows how North African girls indulge their rampant lust once they have started to become emancipated, and he appreciates their wilfulness and the intelligence that goes with their passion. What he likes best in French women is the playful siren-song and light in their eyes. He is in love with all women, in love forever and always the loser. ❤

TAHAR BEN JELLOUN,
Moroccan-born novelist and poet. His most recent work is *L'ange aveugle* (Seuil, Paris, 1992).

Luisa Futoransky

Double portrait with a glass of wine

LOVE, indecipherable love. Every generation has tried to give it a local habitation and a name but it has escaped unscathed and entire, like children and like mystery. Some have seen a little of its light and darkness. Heroes, saints and poets throughout history and the world over have endeavoured to express it and perished in the flames. I tried encamping in the wilderness of words with my language's most authoritative dictionary, that of the Spanish Royal Academy, finding good grazing there for expressions both commonplace and outlandish, my own and other people's.

In my odyssey I learned only that everyone has something to say on the subject and that anything goes, from feelings, real or imagined, to the passion that draws one sex to the other, by way of caresses and not forgetting the chubby, naked, winged babe with the quiverful of arrows. I shipwrecked on passion and came upon suffering, turmoil and disorder, encountered rapture and discovered ecstasy, sin and delirium, mystical union with God, swooning and trance-like states. I saw eyes rolling heavenwards and levitating female saints, and I caught a whiff of stylites perched on top of their columns, like storks only much less graceful and good-humoured.

The expressions used to describe amorous rapture reinforce one another. It is a comet that draws along in its ancient orbit all the possible and impossible forms of love. Thus, the language of the people, a sure source of wisdom, has it that when we reach sexual climax, however briefly, in and with one another, we are transported to the seventh heaven, to the highest heaven, as if six were not enough and as if to speak of love it were necessary to invoke the number seven, which is in all cultures the peerless, most perfect of numbers. No wonder that the verb to love is, in our grammars, the model, the verbal paradigm, the word among words. It is only in love's presence and under its sway that we glimpse Jerusalem, the heavenly city, through a rent in the veil; but to my knowledge no-one who has glimpsed the innermost recesses of heaven or earth or hell has ever returned to tell the tale. If Lazarus could not, why should we demand it of lovers, anchorites or artists?

And yet the latter have given us an answer, in their own ways and as best they could. Sometimes words, despite the vastness of their domain, are inadequate to the task, and then other voices must be borrowed, other wise men followed to reach journey's end. The rarest of rare birds is he who has succeeded in expressing love in its entirety, deploying sounds and silences to encompass heaven, hell and earth and tame the senses. The only one to so succeed, I believe, was—is—Mozart. How strange, though, that his greatest success should be *Don Giovanni*, in which he tells the tragic story of one who is incapable of giving, disabled in love, afflicted by an unquenchable thirst.

Others, like Marc Chagall in his *Double portrait with a glass of wine*—dated, significantly, 1917/1918—have managed to capture through ephemeral images the most perfect of human desires, that for requited, equal, unstinted, unending love. Chagall painted this masterpiece while the world was engaged in perpetrating the assorted atrocities that accompany all wars. Yet again, Europe was plunged in bloody internecine struggles, this time dragging the world into the terrible conflict known as the Great War.

But Bela, the beautiful bride, is dressed in white, between her impatiently swelling breasts nestles a brooch embossed with hope, and she steps forward defiantly. The city's domes and its mean, dark dwellings are left behind, and the dreary landscape dons its finest colours as she passes by. One gloved hand conceals her wedding ring and the other holds a fan of green leaves and garnet-red flowers. Her body is slim and graceful but her step is resolute. A slit in the skirt of her dress reveals a well-turned leg, sheathed in a long stocking of a provocative violet colour. Her shoes are comfortable, suitable for the long road of life. She no longer wears the veil of maidenhood. The vessel has slipped its moorings, the daydreams fade and the thick mists lift, the inexpressible bonds between reality and heart's desire are tightened.

LUISA FUTORANSKY
is an Argentine poet and novelist. Her most recent work is a short novel, *Urracas* (Buenos Aires, 1992).

Double portrait with a glass of wine (1917-1918), by Marc Chagall, oil on canvas.

Her hair is worn in a style that is slightly ahead of its time—the age of the Charleston has not yet come. The composition, the present and the future, are centred on the single eye, liquid and full of emotion and confidence.

Slippered and astride her shoulders, the young groom also advances towards the observer, carried away with joy, drunk on love. He is dressed in green, with a red coat—green the colour of idle dreams, red the colour of anger, of spilt blood, but also, among the Chinese, the colour of happiness.

The glass is half-supped: the lovers have already drunk a toast. Now they will smash it to the ground, committing to the earth the sharp splinters of their sorrows. The lovers have been caught at the very moment, the decisive moment, when the soul is in touch with the ineffable. An angel hovers protectively over them, floating on a cloud of green, the bridegroom's colour, with robe and wings of the same violet as the bride's stocking.

The bride turns a deaf ear to all words, to the dread Stygian ferryman who takes only one passenger at a time and to the deadly song of the sirens; she is borne along by the inexplicable force that works miracles. She shows that one of the deepest, most secret of our recurrent dreams is not impossible: she flies without burning her wings, she glides lightly over the water like a goddess and walks unharmed on the burning coals of the past.

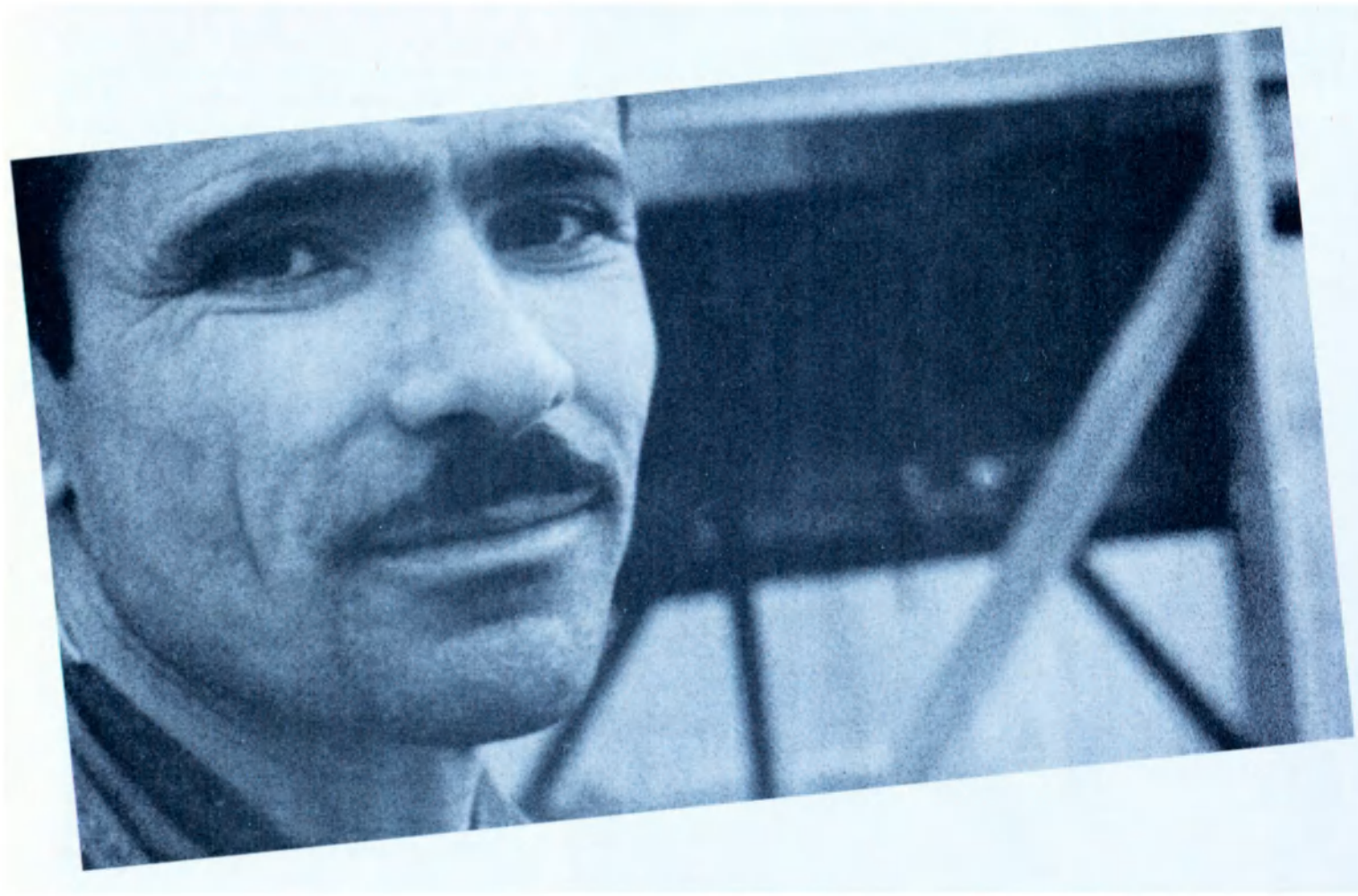
Requited love, the one and only moment when separateness is overcome, and the two who are now one become three, resolving, perhaps, the abiding mystery of the Trinity. Those who have tasted that moment have already forgotten it.

Epilogue: And so Bela and Chagall set off into the wide world to seek their fortune, to conquer Paris. And, as the story goes, they married, had lots of children and lived happily ever after. Marc filled the world with lovers, flying cows and fiddlers on roofs, at other times depicting mourners and graveyards—somehow unjust, like all graveyards.

Now, at the turn of the millennium, floundering in the same iniquitous, fratricidal conflicts, when lovers no longer have a New World to discover and there is no hiding-place for them in cities where we look, powerless, upon the scourges they are prey to, we would do well to find some place for Bela, her young husband, their children and the angel, a place where we can all raise the half-supped glass and drink a toast: to the bride, to life. ❤

J. M. G. Le Clézio

From France, with love



IN the night I call your name, Oriya my wife, and you, Samira, Jamila and Ali, my dear children. I have begun with your name, and it is with your name that I shall end, Oriya my wife, because you are the woman I love more than anything in the world. When I left Tata three years ago, when I left all I had loved and known since my birth, my parents' home, I had nothing to take away with me. We were so poor that I had to leave. I took what was most precious to me: your names, yours above all, Oriya. It is a very sweet name, I repeat it every day and every night. Your name gives me strength, it makes me work, it bestows a blessing on me.

Oriya, your name stirs me and fills me with happiness whenever I utter it. It is deep within me, it has entered the innermost part of my body, sometimes it feels as if I have been hearing it all my life. Every evening, when I come back tired from Guiglione's building site, I enter the room in the Rue d'Italie which I share with Malik, the Tunisian, and I stretch out on the mattress. I no longer hear the sound of the television set, I do not see the blue light flickering in the room, nor those meaningless images, those images that you, Oriya, will never be part of. Malik watches television until he drops off to sleep. He does not talk, he watches everything—sport, films, quizzes, talk-shows, everything—I sometimes think he is going to go mad.

I close my eyes as I lie on the mattress by the window, and you, Oriya, appear before me. Malik cannot see you. I am the only person who can see you in this poky room, because your name is written deep within me and because I am waiting for the day when I can be with you again. Your name is written in a very long sentence, a never-ending sentence that is moving slowly towards

He whose heart lives by love alone shall never die. . . .

Hafiz Shirazi
(c. 1325-1388) Persian poet

you, towards the other side of the world where you are waiting for me. So I can see you.

I am so far from you all, in this city, in this room. Up here under the roof, it is cold in winter and stifling in summer. Our mattresses are laid out on the floor. Malik has the mattress near the door, and mine is near the window. In the middle there is Slimane's mattress. A week ago Slimane, Malik's brother, was crushed by a wall that had not been shored up properly on the site. He lost his right arm. He will not be able to work again. When he gets out of hospital, he will go back to his wife and children in Tunisia. Malik at least talked about that, then went on watching television, his face full of anger. I could not help wondering what you would say, Oriya, if the same thing happened to me, if I came back home maimed. What would our children say?

I like sleeping by the window. On spring mornings I can guess what the weather is going to be like. I can hear the swifts screeching. It is almost as if I can see a little of the light of Tata, the light that you see with your eyes, Oriya.

Tata. I like saying that name too. It's a name that makes the people here laugh. They do not understand it. I lower my voice apologetically when I say it because they find it funny, to let them know that I cannot do anything about it. It is a very sweet name, a name like yours, Oriya, which gives me life and strength. I also say to myself the familiar names of the villages and the markets. They are like the names of my family. Souk Ileta, Tazart, El Khemis, Aiggo, Imitek. I say them with my eyes shut, and I am close to you, Oriya, even if my hands cannot touch you, even if I do not eat your bread or drink your water.

I can see your smile, I can hear the murmur of your voice in my ear, as you sing a lullaby to our son, whom I have not yet seen. I can see the sparkle of your eyes held captive by your kohl-painted eyelids, I can smell the scent of your hair as you comb it in the morning sun in the women's courtyard. I can see you just as I used to do when I peeped at you through the curtains of the window in the men's chamber.

The seasons have come and gone, far from you, Oriya, far from you, my children. In wintertime, it is so cold on the building sites that only the memory of you, Oriya, and the memory of your voice and your eyes keep me alive. For you I lay row upon row of twenty-centimetre-thick breeze blocks, I pour concrete over rusty

A Tunisian palm-grove.

rods, I drive screws into ceiling joists, I smooth plaster on walls. My name is Abdelhak, my father's name is Rebbo, and my mother is Khadidja. Guiglione, our boss, can never remember my name, or does not want to. He calls me Ahmed. All the labourers on the site are called Ahmed. What does it matter? It is for you I heave the shovel, for you I tip the cement and build breeze-block walls. Day after day, month after month I build walls, I smooth plaster. I have built more houses than all the families of Tata would need. I have built whole towns. When I have saved up enough money, I shall return, Oriya, and we shall never again be far from each other.

The sun burns my body, the cold sears my skin, and my arms and legs are breaking from the weight of shovelful after shovelful. I am used to it now. When I came to this city three years ago, I was still as frail and tender as a child. By evening I would be so tired and so lonely that I would lie on the floor and let the tears pour from my eyes. I lived in a dormitory with blacks and Tunisians above a bar, and the neon lights made a bloody stain on the window. There was the noise of cars in the street, the voices of drunken men quarrelling, of women screaming. There were no children, there was no sweetness. It was then that I began to call your name, Oriya, and the names of each of my children, and the name of Tata.

It was then that the memory of the day I met you came back to me, Oriya my wife, in the great palm grove by the river, the day of the festival when you were part of the procession of young girls who came to carry the pollen to the date-palm flowers.

The air was light, I remember it well, and the golden dust floated heavenwards. The valley resounded with singing. As the procession passed in front of me, I saw you, Oriya, and the sparkle of your eyes entered me, never to re-emerge. I knew you were my wife.

In the grey and white winter of the building sites, in this city so far away from you, the memory of that day is ever-present. It is that memory that gives me strength, that carries my shovel, that lifts the heavy loads of cement and plaster.

Even when there is a great silence, even when there is no smile and no word, just Guiglione's orders carrying across the site, and the noise of drills, disk-cutters and jackhammers, and the squeak of pulleys hoisting up yet more cement, yet more plaster, even when there are empty Sundays on the dusty boulevards, the lonely, childless, fear-stalked esplanades where evil men look out for victims, the memory of that day in the valley of date palms is always with me. It is you I see, Oriya. You are wearing your finery, your face and hands are covered with golden pollen, and the sparkle in your eyes enters my eyes, for the rest of our days. ❤

J.M.G. LE CLÉZIO,
French writer, recently published *Pawana* (Gallimard, Paris, 1992).

GREENWATCH
THE UNESCO COURIER – APRIL 1993

Dossier
25 ▶ CAN THE WORLD FEED ITSELF WITHOUT CHEMICALS?
by France Bequette

28 World

Voices from the past
30 ▶ BIRD CALL

Dossier

CAN THE WORLD FEED ITSELF WITHOUT CHEMICALS?

by France Bequette

The International Conference on Nutrition, the first "world nutrition summit", was held in Rome from 5 to 11 December 1992. The six-day meeting of official representatives from over 160 countries, including several ministers of health and agriculture, was jointly sponsored by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) and was also attended by around 160 international and non-governmental organizations. It ended with the adoption of a World Declaration and a Plan of Action to eradicate hunger and malnutrition.

World hunger is a scandal that cannot be tolerated. There is enough food in the world for everyone; the problem is one of inequitable access. In developing countries, some 20 per cent of the population—about 780 million people—still do not get enough food to meet their basic daily needs for nutritional well-being. About 190 million children under five years of age suffer from protein-energy malnutrition and more than two billion people suffer from micronutrient deficiencies that can lead to blindness, mental retardation and even death.

Agriculture should be able to meet everybody's food needs but, whereas the civilizations of the past were mainly rural and families raised and grew at least enough for their own consumption, the millions of people who throng the world's megacities today are cut off from the land. In his book *Earth in the Balance*, U.S. Vice-President Al Gore writes: "The history of agriculture is intertwined with the history of humankind. Each increase in the size of human ▶

CAN THE WORLD FEED ITSELF WITHOUT CHEMICALS?

▶ settlements was accompanied by further sophistication in the co-operative effort to produce, store and distribute ever-larger quantities of food. New technologies, like the plough and the irrigation ditch, led to new abundance but also new problems, like soil erosion and the buildup of salt in the soil."

New technologies can turn out to be disastrous, as Al Gore points out: "The high yield methods frequently used in the American Midwest loosen and over time pulverize the soil to the point that large amounts of topsoil wash away with each rain, a process that leads inevitably to a sharp reduction in the ability of future generations to grow similar quantities of food from the same land."

Moreover, as the number of people working the land is constantly dwindling, farming has to become intensive, producing as much as possible to feed a steadily growing population while remaining cost-effective.

By the end of the century, the world's population will have reached over 6 billion and could level off at around 11 and a half billion in 2100, only 13 per cent of whom will be living in the "rich" countries. This means farming more land or increasing yields. At present, according to a publication by the International Group of National Associations of Manufacturers of Agrochemical Products (GIFAP), 97 per cent of the world's output of agricultural produce is grown on 3 per cent of the land. Over the next 50 years, we will have to produce as much food as has been produced since the first human beings appeared on Earth, making it essential to maintain high productivity in the rich countries and to develop a productive agriculture in the rest of the world.

Pesticides: for and against

According to Professor Adolf Weber, of the University of Kiel, Germany, "increased food production relies on the steady flow and uptake of scientific and technological advances. These can bring more land into production and increase the productivity of agricultural land. Land improvement methods, power, machinery, irrigation, seeds, fertilizers and crop protection products all play a part. It is generally cheaper to intensify production rather than extend the land area under cultivation."

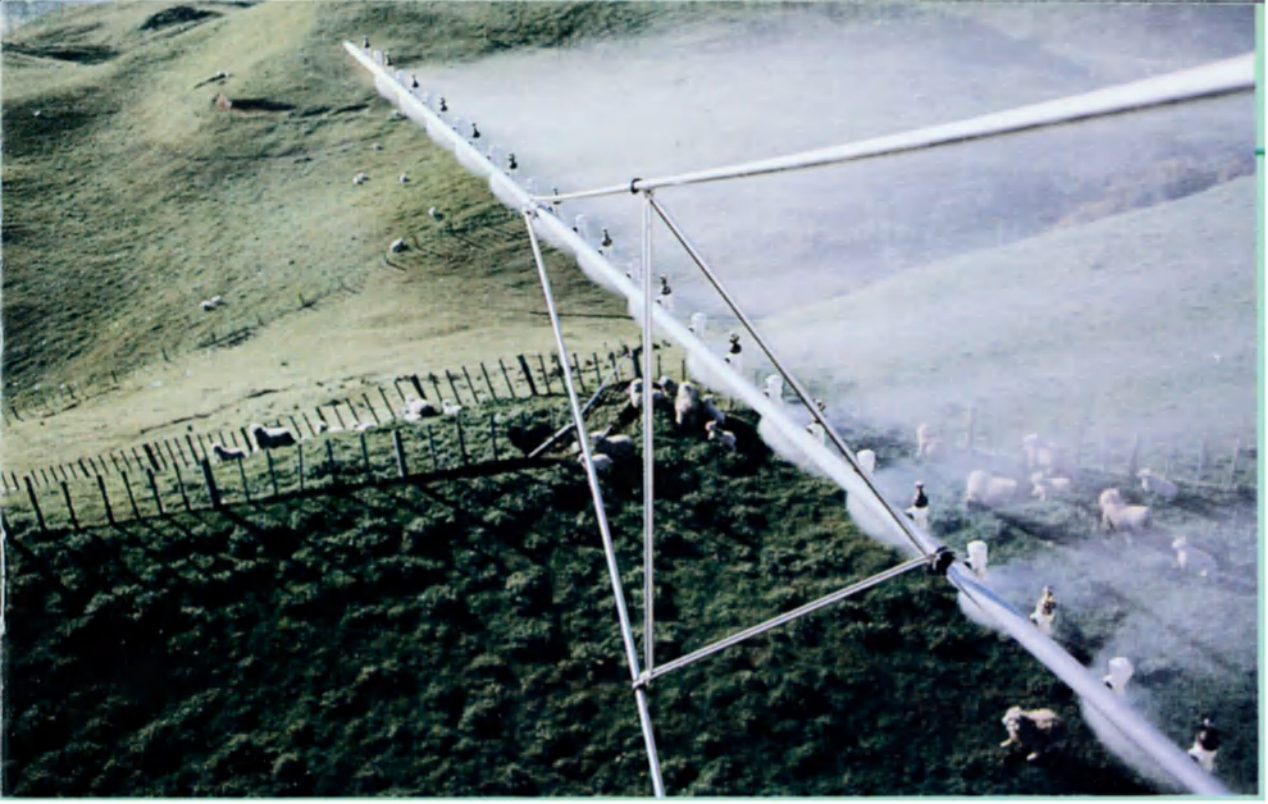
The aim of agrochemistry is to protect crops and promote soil fertility. Here, we shall consider only pesticides. Plants are said to be threatened by over 15,000 species of harmful fungi, over 10,000 species of harmful insects and over 2,000 species of weeds, not to mention viruses, bacteria, rodents, and so on. For each type of enemy, there is a class of products, of which the main three are insecticides, herbicides (or weed-killers) and fungicides; other categories include slug killers, rodenticides, and so on.

Philippe Desbrosses, an environmentalist working with the Commission of the European Communities and the European Parliament, has pointed out that world sales of pesticides have long been regarded as indispensable to progress in crop protection. Proponents of "biological" farming would strongly disagree with the need for pesticides, holding that nature needs no help in defending itself against predators. *Green Fields, Grey Future*, a report published by Greenpeace in 1992, revealed that EEC member states, taken together, are the largest users of pesticides in the world, with a consumption of over 314 million tonnes in 1991.

When a farmer sees mildew or Colorado beetles attacking his potato or tomato field, and if he can afford it, it is tempting for him to resort to crop protection products. A few judicious applications will guarantee a good harvest, but what about the impact on health and the environment?

Public opinion in the industrialized countries is becoming increasingly alarmed about the systematic use of pesticides, which is seen as increasing the risk of cancer. In 1989, a pesticide called Alar, used to treat apples, was cited in the United States as presenting a health hazard for

Treating fruit trees with insecticide (France).



Spraying weed-killer from a helicopter (New Zealand).

children and set off a major scare. However, according to Professor Maurice Tubiana, an internationally known cancer specialist, "if the frequent presence in food of fertilizers, herbicides, insecticides, and so on, had any noticeable carcinogenic effect, an increase in the incidence of stomach cancer should have been observed, since the stomach is the first of the viscera to be exposed to risks from food. The rapid and regular decline of stomach cancer in Western countries shows that this is not the case." Nevertheless, according to data compiled by the World Health Organization, about 50,000 people die every year, and 500,000 are poisoned, as a result of pesticides, through their inhalation or ingestion or through skin contact. The developing countries, where substances that have been banned in developed countries are still on the market, are particularly affected because, while certain products are identified as potentially lethal, either they are not clearly labelled, or users are illiterate and cannot read the instructions, do not wear protective clothing, are not able to shower, or have no medical care available in the event of accidents.

Alternatives to chemical control

Manufacturers point out that, just as for medicaments, every such product has to obtain clearance from the public authorities before it can be sold. According to a statement from one group of manufacturers, in France this requires "a total of eight to ten years of experimentation, research and studies... costing from 600 to 700 million francs." It goes on to say that "Toxicological testing is done on animals, microorganisms, game, aquatic fauna, birds, bees, the soil and flora... in order to assess as accurately as possible the likely effects on humans and on the environment." It adds that "the risk factor is never zero, whether the substance absorbed is kitchen salt, aspirin or the residue of a product used to protect plants." A brochure published by the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment, Forests and the Countryside about new legislation on the use of products to treat plants explains: "The law... applies to all substances which, even if absorbed in relatively small quantities, can be dangerous to life or health through a chemical or chemical-physical action, and which consequently must be handled with particular care". It adds that "almost all treatment products are toxic!"

In 1948, the Swiss chemist Paul Müller was awarded the Nobel Prize for Physiology and Medicine for having discovered the insecticidal properties of DDT, a miracle product that would help check famine and diseases such as malaria. A Canadian government publication, *The State of Canada's Environment* (1991), indicates that within a dozen years proof of the harmful effects and residual persistence of DDT began to build up. In the early 1970s, when its dangerous nature had been clearly and irrefutably established, it was partially or completely banned in many countries, including Canada, but it is still available in developing countries.

Pictographs showing items of protective clothing to be worn when handling chemical products. From top down: goggles, gloves, face mask.

This example calls for several observations. It can take a while to determine the real toxicity of a substance and years to have it banned. Once it finds its way into the soil, it is sometimes still found there decades after it was used. It can also be found in surface waters. According to some specialists, 432 parasite insects were resistant to insecticides in 1980, as compared with 7 in 1937.

Can the world be fed without the use of chemical products? China, which cannot afford to buy them, feeds nearly fourteen people from every hectare of farmland, while France feeds only two. Referring to the most comprehensive study ever done on the subject, carried out in 1991 by Cornell University, Al Gore writes: "... farmers who used natural alternatives to chemical control of pests (such as integrated pest management and crop rotation) could abandon many pesticides and herbicides without reducing yields at all and without significant increases in the price of food. And according to the study, in the case of those pesticides for which no substitute has yet been identified, the volume of chemicals used could, in most cases, safely be cut in half."

To allay public apprehensions, the main requirement is that environmentalists and industrialists should agree to get together and talk. ■

FRANCE BEQUETTE
is a Franco-American journalist specializing in environmental questions. Since 1985 she has been associated with the WANAD-UNESCO training programme for African news-agency journalists.

ENVIRONMENTALISTS AND INDUSTRY JOIN FORCES TO PROTECT THE ALPS

Alp Action, an organization chaired by Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, has undertaken a number of conservation projects in the Alps in conjunction with various corporate partners. With backing from a chocolate manufacturer, a scheme has been launched to plant some 200,000 trees in the high Alps, and another Alp Action partner, a leading construction company, is helping to restore traditional Alpine chalets. The bearded vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*), a magnificent bird with a three-metre wingspan, is being reintroduced into the French Alps, and endangered butterfly species are to be provided with sanctuaries in Switzerland, thanks, respectively, to a holding company and a cosmetics firm. ■

PAPER RECYCLING– A BIG MISTAKE?

According to Sten Nilsson, leader of the Forest Resources Project at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis in Vienna, recycling vast amounts of paper could do more harm than good to the environment. Recycling paper has obvious environmental and economic benefits—it limits the growth of landfills, and making new paper from waste paper requires less energy than using new wood fibres. Professor Nilsson notes, however, that "if we were to recycle *all* of our paper products the net effect would be to increase air pollution and consumption of fossil fuels." The resultant increase in airborne emissions of carbon dioxide, sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides would be disastrous for many of Europe's forests—proving once more that, where the environment is concerned, there are no quick fixes. ■

LARVAE AND FUNGI WITH A WEAKNESS FOR NARCOTICS

According to a 1990 United Nations report, the illicit production and consumption of drugs are still increasing at a rapid rate, representing a major problem. Is there any environmentally-friendly way of eliminating the coca shrub, the opium poppy and the cannabis plant? The caterpillars of certain lepidopterous insects eat coca leaves and thus constitute a valuable weapon. Certain fungi attack plants from which narcotics are derived. More than 40 species are found on cannabis and coca plants, and more than 30 on the opium poppy. Several of these could turn out to be effective biological control agents and could be used in eradication programmes. ■

THE ARCTIC–A NUCLEAR DUMP?

An international conference on environmental problems in the Arctic was held in Arkhangelsk in October 1992. Participants learned that in 1955 the Soviets had established an atomic test site on the island of Novaya Zemlya, between the Barents Sea and the Kara Sea, and carried out tests there, first atmospheric then underground, until 1990. Novaya Zemlya and its coastal waters have also become a dumping-ground for 11,000 containers of nuclear waste and at least 20 nuclear reactors of various origins, with more to come as a result of disarmament. This is causing alarm in Norway as well as among the local population. The International Atomic Energy Agency has recommended that a strictly controlled storage facility and reprocessing plant be set up there, but nobody knows who will foot the bill. ■

CULTIVATING RED CORAL

Unlike reef-building warm-water coral, which requires substantial amounts of sunlight, red coral *(Corallium rubrum)*, the kind used in jewellery, grows in the shade of caves. Because of its market value it is in danger of over-exploitation, especially where it grows in shallow water. This, along with its total disappearance from some areas, has led the General Fisheries Council for the Mediterranean to approve an interesting new method for cultivating it. Four eight-tonne concrete "caves" were built, then sunk in a marine reserve offshore from the Monaco Oceanographic Institute. Coral colonies and branches were then transplanted on to artificial substrata fixed to the walls. The coral has stood up well to the move and has grown 15 mm in two years, a very rapid growth rate for the species. If the success of this experiment is confirmed, the same method could be employed in the areas where the coral has disappeared. ■

THE GREENING OF NEW CALEDONIA'S MINES

Each year four million tonnes of nickel are extracted in the French territory of New Caledonia, making the island the world's third largest producer. The local authorities, in association with ORSTOM, the French research and overseas development agency, have launched a research programme with a view to rehabilitating former mining sites. The sites are bare and inhospitable, with little water, few fertilizing elements, and too much magnesium and nickel. Only species native to the island are capable of adapting to these conditions. In accordance with an agreement between ORSTOM, the International Cooperation Centre of Agricultural Research for Development (CIRAD), and the South Province of New Caledonia, about twenty endogenous species of herbaceous and ligneous plants have been selected to restore a protective cover of diverse vegetation, toning in with the landscape. By avoiding the introduction of alien species, a move which has been responsible for destructive plant invasions on other Pacific islands, the plan sets an example of respect for the local environment. ■

BATTLING BACTERIA TAKE ON MOSQUITOES

Dirty, stagnant water is a happy hunting ground for *Culex quinquefasciatus* mosquitoes, which are a serious problem in Cameroon. A project supported and partially financed by the Tropical Disease Research Programme of the World Health Organization has enabled entomologists to try out new countermeasures in Yaoundé and Maroua. Instead of using chemical insecticides, which are harmful to the environment and to which insects develop resistance, they use *Bacillus sphericus* bacteria, which kill the mosquito larvae when they ingest them. This technique produces excellent results and is both totally harmless and relatively inexpensive. ■

CLEAN WATER FOR BELO HORIZONTE

Brazil is launching a water pollution control plan in the state of Minas Gerais with the help of a $145-million loan from the World Bank. The loan will cover some of the costs of drainage and flood prevention, sewage collection and treatment infrastructure, and facilities for collecting and disposing of industrial solid waste. Metropolitan Belo Horizonte is plagued by uncontrolled industrialization, and suffers from inadequate urban and sanitation infrastructures, resulting in the pollution of rivers and reservoirs. ■

BIRD CALL

In Aristophanes' famous play The Birds *(414 B.C.), two Athenians go to live among the birds and found an ideal city. A blend of lyricism, wit and dreams of universal brotherhood,* The Birds *shows Aristophanes at the height of his powers as a master of word-play.*

Epo popo popo popo, popo popo poi!
Ió. ió, ití, ití, ití, ití!
Come along, come along, birds of my own feather,
Birds who live in the farmers' well-sown fields,
Eaters of seed and of barley, myriad flocks
Of a hundred species, fluttering quickly,
Uttering gentle calls,
Twittering together on the furrowed soil
In a pleased voice, tió, tió, tió!
Birds who live in gardens, or in the mountains,
Birds who feed on the wild olive
And the fruit of the arbutus,
Quickly fly to my call, triotó, triotó totobrix.
Birds of the watery places,
Snapping up the sharp-mouthed midges
Along the ditches in the marshland,
Birds of the swamp and the fenland
And the pleasant meadow of Marathon;
Bird of the stripy wing, godwit, godwit, godwit!
And all the tribes that fly with the halcyon
Over the waves of the sea, come along, come along!
Come here to be informed
Of a revolution, hi! all long-necked birds, you too
Come along!
Come and meet a shrewd old fellow,
Full of wisdom, new in outlook,
Enterprising. Come along now,
Come along now, join the meeting!
Toro toro toro torotix!
Kikkabau! Kikkabau!
Toro toro toro toro lililix!

Aristophanes (c. 445-c. 386 B.C.)
Greek comic dramatist
Translated by David Barrett and Alan H. Sommerstein.
Penguin Classics, 1979

■ *The story on this page appears in an anthology entitled* Compagnons du Soleil *("Companions of the Sun") co-published (in French) by* UNESCO, *Editions La Découverte (Paris) and the Fondation pour le progrès de l'Homme. The anthology has been prepared under the general editorship of the African historian Joseph Ki-Zerbo, in collaboration with Marie-Josèphe Beaud.*

René Depestre

The enchanted garden

THERE is a warm-blooded, pagan side to my Caribbean character that immediately sets my vision of love poles apart from the gloomy experience that has coloured the history of Eros in the Western world. That existential gloom no doubt accounts for the feelings of shame, sadness and guilt in relation to sexual activity that pornography helps to keep alive, at the expense of the frank and free celebration of the act of love.

In the Caribbean, the same sense of the wonderful within the day-to-day that characterizes the Americas and is one of the hallmarks of the Creole sensibility also makes its beneficent influence felt in a relaxed attitude to the pleasures of sex: the gods themselves make love freely, and the enjoyment of the sexual act is the occasion for a pagan ceremony, free from anxiety and the pangs of religious conscience, and far removed from so-called "porn", which is nothing other than the crudity and obscenity of that diabolical killjoy, the lout.

***In the land of Eros,* a painting by the Haitian artist Blaise Saint Louis**

In my preferred erotic culture, the woman achieves fulfilment in a paradise garden, clasped in the arms of the enchanter, a gardener whose spade thrusts and turns passionately in the innermost parts of her adorable body. On this level, an embrace has wings to carry lovers boldly onward, joyously spiralling upward to the seventh heaven of living. It is in these lyrical, dream-like terms that, ever since I was an adolescent, I have experienced the act of love, thus keeping faith with the dream state that seems to be the main undercurrent of the Haitian sensibility.

On the plantation in colonial days, sexual diversions were perhaps the only form of freedom allowed to my slave ancestors, the freedom to dance out their loneliness and forget for a while their unhappiness, offering up their flesh with a burning intensity. This erotic heritage does not simply reproduce former patterns of African or French sexuality: there is without a doubt a Creole flavour to eroticism in the Caribbean, just as there is, in our bedroom exploits, a fanciful sexual surrealism, with a spicy Creole seasoning, that existed long before the literary movement that André Breton, Philippe Soupault, Louis Aragon, Paul Eluard and their circle made famous in Europe.

By rehabilitating the superb concept of *amour fou* or sublime love in European culture, the Surrealists to their credit restored to love-making both its romantic dimension and a marvellous freedom in the employment of the intimate parts involved in bringing it to its glorious fulfilment. This represented a resounding break with the Judæo-Christian view of sexuality (which brings a taste of doom to the pure wine of copulation).

The Surrealists also gave pride of place to *libertinage* in love, but I must confess that, reading the works of glittering libertines such as Restif de la Bretonne, Aretino, the Chevalier de Nerciat, Mirabeau, Choderlos de Laclos, Sade, Casanova and the rest, I feel a kind of nagging discomfort. Though they undeniably contributed to the progress of the Enlightenment and of democracy by secularizing the right to pleasure, these books leave an aftertaste of guilt. A grim erotic self-awareness often slips into the beds of lovers apparently well suited to happy, innocent, carefree love, and a pall of ultimate disenchantment hangs over the boldest love-making.

***The animals' feast,* a Haitian painting by Y. J. Pierre.**

In the libertine tradition, sexual pleasure seems still to have something smutty, lubricious or even fetid about it, a murky aura of sinfulness that pornography has been quick to take over and incorporate into its nasty arsenal. Eros seems to be under constant threat from Thanatos: the familiar post-coital sadness plunges the carefree couple into a mood of melancholy and contrition. The grim figure of mortal sin that two—or more—had come together to drive out of the door has the impudence to reappear through the open window, a slobbering voyeur toting a shotgun and wearing a death's-head mask!

In the Caribbean, at cock-crow in the enchanted garden, a man and a woman light-

heartedly cast aside any sense of sin, leaving it to die of hunger and thirst outside their door while they make love like free and independent beings, remaking the seasons, the stars and the whole beautiful world in a shared state of poetic ecstasy.

I belong to an erotic culture that owes allegiance to Æschylus, who once proclaimed "the joy of holy Heaven as it penetrates the Earth", the joy of the male instrument, the ploughshare, as it plunges for minutes on end, minutes of tremendous bliss, into the yielding female earth, romping, dreaming, laughing, revelling, climaxing in the gratified flesh that fully participates in its pleasure. Experienced thus in shared jubilation, the act of love enables Adam's rod and Eve's starry triangle to laugh out loud in the face of death!

In this blessed realm, there was for a long time a paradoxical situation in Haiti. In the oral culture, Haiti's version of the Creole tradition, the imagination was given an utterly free rein in matters of love-making and eroticism. Haitian erotic tales overflow with humour, ingenuity and lyricism, and their language is as joyfully unrestrained as the exuberant, magical art of Haiti's naive painters. Strangely enough, it was, on the other hand, some time before a similar exuberance of tone and movement manifested itself in our French-language literature. It was not until Jacques Roumain's *Gouverneurs de la rosée* (1944) and *Compère général soleil* (1955) by Jacques Stephen Alexis that young lovers' contagious enjoyment of carnality entered the novel.

It is high time, good gentlefolk, as normal men and women, to restore to the celebration of love its dream configuration. In an age overshadowed by the tragic threat of Aids, it is more than ever necessary to counter all those who have declared war on love with a lust for life that is careful and gentle in its erotic manifestations. Lovers must be free to enrich their amatory experience with all the spiritual and physical delights that contribute to the well-rounded fullness of dreams.

All that now lies between us and the garden that is woman, the celebration of the mystery of her ample forms, is a river of light that I beckon you to wade across with eyes closed. Transcending the dogmas that divide them, whether in Brazil or Sweden, Japan or Italy, in India or in Haiti, everywhere on Earth, the gods who hold the secrets of the art of living are well pleased by the warm, round shape of love, which is why, in the beginning, in their collective wisdom they decided to bestow the gift of roundness on the Sun, the circling dance, the Moon, the harvests, the flight of swallows, the movement of the tides, beds, a summer evening's grass, blissful intercourse and the other marvels of our fleeting existence.

What messiah could contradict this without denying the redeeming worth and eternal beauty of the carnal act, to which, gods and mortals alike, we owe the poetry and music of our daily lives?

RENÉ DEPESTRE
is a Haïtian poet and novelist. Among his works published in English is *The Festival of the Greasy Pole* (1990).

Mahmoud

Why Ulysses?

Head of Ulysses, fragment of a marble statue found in Italy (first century B.C.)

In late afternoon I would take refuge on a balcony overlooking a very quiet little street, closed to traffic, forgotten by passers-by. Released from the four walls of the apartment, isolated from the rest of the household, I cut myself off from friends and could see, sitting on the tiles still warm from the sun, a corner of the summer sky taking on its fiery colours.

I had two stacks of magazines bought by my father to keep me company. He had recently given me permission to read them. The magazines in the first pile dealt with theoretical, abstract topics that had little appeal for a ten-year-old. I leafed through them slowly, taking infinite pains to try to penetrate some of their mysteries.

My reward came when I delightedly immersed myself in the issues of the second magazine. They were largely devoted to short stories written by Arab authors or translated from various languages, mainly European. But they also featured a wonderful serial—unabridged (or what I thought at the time to be unabridged) translations of the Iliad and the Odyssey.

My family had moved to Damietta not long before. I had spent my early childhood in a northern Egyptian village not far from the coast, where the tang of the sea could already be smelled. My father had been appointed headmaster of a school there. We lived in one of the village's few stone houses, whose first floor comprised two apartments. A young couple lived across from ours. The husband worked on a boat that plied between several Mediterranean ports and regularly dropped anchor in the waters of the Nile, on the outskirts of the village. He was away for weeks at a time, leaving his beautiful young bride all alone.

Since she had not yet had any children, she could spend her days more or less as she pleased. She would give my mother a hand, looking after my sisters and especially, I think, myself. She told me tales that I would later find in no book and which held me spellbound for hours on end. She opened up for me the secret doors of ever-changing kingdoms, where even my unbridled imagination was soon out of breath in its vain attempts to keep up with her.

I remember that big room in her apartment one evening when it was pouring with rain, as it sometimes does in the Delta. She had lit a small heater to ward off the chill that from time to time made me shiver. I was sitting facing her, as close as I could, riveted to that face whose beauty turned the heads of all the men in the village. Her eyes seemed lit from within, while her melodious voice carried me beyond the seas, across deserts and valleys, in search of faraway princesses, dashing princes and wicked characters who unrelentingly tried to come between them. The villains would be successful for a while but always failed in the end.

We were separated a short time later. My father obtained his transfer to Damietta, and we left the village forever. I was never to see my beloved enchantress again.

Hussein

The head of the Sphinx of Giza (Egypt).

Sitting on the tile floor of my balcony, I would sometimes feel the little shiver of that magical evening run through me again. As I followed Ulysses' wanderings, our neighbour's face would appear to me sometimes in Penelope's enigmatic smile, sometimes in Nausicaa's disquieting glance. For a long while I missed the warm, soft closeness of her body. Then, imperceptibly, she drifted out of my life, to take her place among the princesses of legend, standing behind her shutters, lost in one of the countless palaces into which she had led me and to which I no longer held the keys.

Homer introduced me to more complex, more tormented heroes, whose paths criss-crossed before my eyes at a pace that now depended only on how fast I could read. I had sometimes lapped up dozens of pages before nightfall, when my father's voice yanked me out of my dream world to give me some errand to do, or my mother, worried about my eyesight, made me come reluctantly inside.

I often got lost in the overpopulated plot of the Trojan War, but found a few reliable bearings. There were characters to whom I was clearly drawn, others whom I definitely disliked. I detested Helen, whose culpable frivolity was the cause of the war, and I hated Menelaus even more for taking her back after she had betrayed him so many times. But above all, I was won over by Ulysses.

Why Ulysses? Why not Achilles, for example? The affinity I instantly felt for Ulysses left me baffled. Nothing about him resembled the hero I would have liked to be, or at least thought I would. What perplexed me the most were his confused feelings, his contradictory impulses, making him so unlike the clean-cut heroes of my early childhood. I was all the more perplexed to discover the mysterious sway he held over me, the disconcerting ease with which I was drawn to his side.

Penelope on the other hand fitted easily into my familiar world. She was the legitimate heir to those exemplary queens whom I admired for their tenacious fidelity and incredible resistance to every temptation. Yet it was to her husband that I was irresistibly drawn, that moody, wise, insatiably curious adventurer who, not satisfied with trying to find his way home, was eager on his homeward journey to explore other possible dawns, unknown feelings and new temptations, temptations to which he sometimes succumbed.

Although his myth was far more familiar in my environment than that of Ulysses, it was not until several years later that I came across the Arab hero Qaïs, who was "mad with love for Laila". According to the legend, Indian in origin as I later learned, the young man and his beloved were brought up together in a nomadic tribe. Qaïs, who was an outstandingly gifted poet, very soon began singing of Laila's beauty and of the love he felt and would always feel for her. Naturally, as soon as he was old enough he asked for her hand in marriage, but, contrary to all

Majnun (Qaïs) and Laila swoon on meeting each other again. Fifteenth-century Persian miniature.

expectations, Laila's father flatly turned him down, on the grounds that the success of the young man's poems had damaged his daughter's reputation. Qaïs adamantly stood up for his love and the father stubbornly continued turning him down, finally going beyond the point of no return by giving Laila to another.

Qaïs nearly went out of his mind. He left his tribe and for many years wandered alone in the desert, avoiding human contact, and with only animals for company, until one day he came across his tribe. He asked about Laila and found out that she had indeed been given to another in marriage. Seeking out her husband, he addressed him sharply, prying into his relationship with Laila. The husband's embarrassed answers only made him more desperate. Finally he sought out Laila herself, only to discover that the young woman had not had much trouble coming to terms with her fate. The only thing left for the poet to do was fade out of sight from his kinsfolk, once and for all.

I read and reread many versions of the legend, in prose and in verse, with and without explanatory notes. I never managed to feel sympathetic towards the two protagonists. From the outset, I thought Qaïs was too weak, too passive, and Laila's character did not ring true. There was nothing glorious about their story. They lacked the courage to take their own lives, as Romeo and Juliet would do a few centuries later, and Qaïs, though betrayed, did not strangle his Desdemona. Moreover, Laila's love seemed to me suspect from the start. It was not as strong as that of Qaïs; she did not deserve his love. Theirs was not a shared feeling, but a one-sided passion that became an embarrassment.

I could never fathom the attitude of Laila's father. What had got into the man? Qaïs was a kinsman, a natural match for his daughter. How had Laila's honour been stained? Poetry was a highly-valued means of expression in Arab tribes. Some women even confided in poets in order to achieve a respectable celebrity status through them. A few of them regretted it when the poets went too far and suggested a too intimate knowledge of their persons. But Qaïs was safe from such criticism. His poetry spoke only of love, and his love remained desperately chaste to the end.

The story left a bitter taste in my mouth, the feeling of a waste whose senselessness irritated me for a long time. At one point I tried dispelling this unease by attempting to identify myself with the heroes, trying to see them in a historical context, however approximate. I finally gave up, resigned to living with my unease, content to observe the unrivalled popularity Qaïs continued to enjoy throughout the Arab world and to listen for endlessly repeated echoes of his heart-rending lament in all the Egyptian love songs. I could understand neither how nor why an entire people that so greatly admired the manly qualities of courage, endurance and indifference to suffering could have identified with a hero so lacking in those qualities, and whose life was a tale of woe from beginning to end.

I opted for Ulysses, dissociating myself from the general opinion of my countrymen. Were they not inexplicably repudiating themselves, and some of their most loudly proclaimed values, by applauding a hero like Qaïs? As a youth I began taking note of these interlocking acts of betrayal, all these rifts that little by little spawned new loyalties. Part of me, however, would always remain an orphan.

As far back as my eyes could see, I could no longer discern my beloved enchantress, but I would keep on scanning the horizon. ❤

MAHMOUD HUSSEIN
is the pen name of Bahgat Elnadi and Adel Rifaat, respectively director and editor-in-chief of the *Unesco Courier*.

Nina Sibal

Miss Savitri and her shadow

HAROUN, who is editor of a magazine in Paris, wants me to write an article on love in India. He phoned me from Paris this morning with his proposal. The call arrived in the office of the Chief Librarian, since I have no direct line, and caused considerable consternation. You can imagine that the Central Secretariat Library, where I work, tucked away in a wing of Shastri Bhavan, hedged in by all manner of Government offices, a branch of the Central Telephone Exchange, the Regional Passport Office, and so on, is not accustomed to receiving calls from Paris, capital of the fashionable world, dream of callow youth and the heart's breath of beautiful women. At least three colleagues rushed in separately to inform me that Haroun from Paris would call again. One remembered that I had just come back from a course at the Institute of Journalism in Paris. A librarian trying to shed his skin, to emerge as a journalist poised at the edge of a turning world. Waiting to jump on, with you of course. Everything arrives and begins with you. I would never have got to Paris if you hadn't used your considerable influence.

"Haroun, how wonderful to hear from you!" The line was as clear as if I was talking to him from my little studio in the Rue du Bac, which I gave up forever last month.

He wants me to write an article on love in India for an issue of his magazine dedicated to love. It was too expensive to argue that it was a similar degradation everywhere, that it didn't have much to do with particular countries. He spoke of cultural differences, offered me 300 dollars and his renewed friendship. I could almost see him, lights gleaming in his brown eyes, smoothing his frizzy, steel-grey hair with soft, small fingers, their nails carefully manicured.

Normally such an article would not be difficult to write. I'm very well read for an assistant librarian, and now I've done this course in Paris. I could write about the great temples of Konarak and Khajuraho, where sculptures in holy stone depict the cavorting of beautiful men and women, their legs wrapped around each other, curved breasts, slim waists, large organs, heavy thighs holding the pleasures of love-success, all offered to the sun-god in the ordinary routine of life,

Above and preceding page, the Indian film actress Zeenat Aman

flesh and spirit mixing easily, so deliciously, in the sixty-five love-postures of the Kama Sutra, as they strain towards the highest pleasure of all, the release of enlightenment, of Nirvana. That's what each eye is fixed on, no matter that they had worked their way through the anguish and delirious delight of finely-differentiated love-making.

"Or you know, Haroun, I could write about Moghul paintings, Pahari miniatures, pornographic illustrations from the Kashmiri kings' courts of three centuries ago. We have a highly developed branch of love-painting, illustrating the great Indian love stories, *Sohni-Mahiwal, Laila-Majnu, Heer-Ranjha.* No?"

We're obsessed with love, anyhow, like everybody else. We think about it all the time, we dream about it, like a tree waiting to fall.

I got the idea that he didn't want any of the usual stuff. "Foreigners slip too easily into the Kama Sutra and all that," he said. "Surely there's something more recent." Just like a good editor, laconic, looking at the floor or into the green distance, smiling like an archangel when you present something good. You're supposed to understand the meaning sticking to both sides of the word. Especially with an editor in Paris. Everybody in the library believes that Paris is the most beautiful city in the world. It is one month since I returned, again into your arms my dear—where else?—but Paris is still so much with me. For example, when I go out with my sandwiches at lunch-time, to the lawns beside Rajpath. You know it well. One day you will ride in state up this great central road of the city, slowly up the low hill leading to Rashtrapati Bhavan, abode of our President, with its grand cupola, and be sworn in as Minister in this or that cabinet. Have patience, you are still young, you have time. Who knows this better than I, who sleep with you at night from time to time, whenever you will allow me?

Behind the splendid wings of the Presidential residence are the Moghul Gardens, laid out in straight lines, held in by rigid flower borders. Until three years ago, before terrorist activity overtook all our privileges, we ordinary mortals could buy tickets and enter there when summer flowers were at the peak of their bloom. It is indeed a pity that you and I can never walk in gardens together. I like that very much. To pass under fruit-laden trees with your beloved, to sit with spreading green grass like velvet under your bare feet, the smell of rich earth coming up from burrowing fingers. Gardens are very much in the tradition of love in our country. Perhaps even the Moghul Gardens were conceived originally for dalliance. Courtly love-scenes in our classics were always set in gardens, with cheerful eyes peeping from behind bushes at the entwined lovers, and a small group of musicians playing from a distant pagoda, open on all sides to the winds, which carried the sweet sounds of flutes and sitars through the caressing air.

❤

IDEAS FOR A MAIDEN SPEECH

But the other beautiful gardens of Delhi are public, open to anyone who can buy a ticket, a small fraction of what it costs to see an Amitabh movie. I understand perfectly, you cannot afford to be seen walking with me in a public place. It is exactly what the newspapermen are looking for. A photograph on the first page of the *Indian Express*, perhaps, captioned "Miss Savitri Behn walking in Buddha Jayanti Park with 'a friend'." They might even get a picture of me draped around your beautiful body, gazing at you with my usual adoration. Everybody knows that the Buddha Jayanti Park is for lovers. Especially the policemen. They leer through the bushes, waiting for the right moment to jump out, fondle a breast or two, extract some money, confused notes changing hands in horrid shadows. Then they drag off a deeply mortified, protesting couple, their sweet kisses and touching all forgotten, a dis-

NINA SIBAL,
Indian novelist, recently published *The Secret Life of Gujjar Mal and other stories* (1993).

tant golden haze suddenly crumpled in the clutches of the law, to the police station, to pay a huge fine, or alternatively spend a night in prison for indecent exposure, separately of course—whoever heard of housing men and women together in jail?

This must not ever happen to Miss Savitri. It would ruin her political career forever, destroy all chances of eventually marrying a rich businessman who would fund her campaigns in the countryside. I would, my love, rather spend thousands of lunch-times alone on the lawns beside Rajpath, trailing between vendors of banana chips and *channa-bhatura,* stalls of pens and Rexine purses, or float off to watch street plays on dowry-deaths and oppression of the tribals, or attend a demonstration in the Boat Club against the destruction of the environment, or the dismissal of the BJP Government in Himachal—rather than allow the faintest whiff of scandal to touch your career or your life. Not, of course, that you would ever give me the chance of compromising you. I am constantly admiring your firm will, clear mind and determination. They must stand you in good stead in the political milieu you have chosen.

We are not very busy in the library. There's no money coming in this year for fresh purchases. The country's economy is fragile, we are tightening our belts. You know of course the extent of our foreign debt. Perhaps you should make your maiden speech in Parliament on this point. They will think you are intelligent. Devastating combination, an attractive, intelligent new woman MP. Anyway, I have plenty of time. The library is not highly frequented, though it is thrust in the heart of official Delhi. By Pandit Nehru himself. He planned for its easy access to babus and clerks, petty functionaries located in crowded offices on either side of Rajpath. They come into consult the C.C.S. leave manuals or annotated Service Rules, published by Jain Book Agency. There's a lot of time to think about this article. Quite often since coming back I suffer from claustrophobia, hemmed in by stacks of dusty books. The usual question, like a snake, nudges with its blunt head: where do I go from here? At such points I retreat immediately with my lunch packet to the Boat Club lawns and dream of you, and how it will be when we meet. Though this does not happen often, now. You pass a cool, gentle hand through my hair and explain the responsibilities of a new Member, though Parliament hasn't opened yet. Why must I trail after you, a slug with brown flesh, leaving a silver trail in your grass?

❤

PAYMENT IN ADVANCE

Today Haroun's call drew my attention to this question of "Love in India". Why should it be different from anywhere else? It is the same torture and humiliation, I suppose. But hearing his voice makes me think of my time in Paris. It was the first time I had been away from you since we met three years ago, and you captured my heart, drew me into your net, swept up the bits and pieces of me into a paper bag which you carry in your hand like a magician's reticule. You jangle it in the air if I make the smallest movement to stray. And you take payment in advance. I paid heavily for Paris. I was faithful to you all the time I was there. Perhaps we are stupid about love, in India, or incompetent. I never seem to reach the wide, aching arch of equality, perfect, blissful, like in Moghul architecture. You can see it in Humayun's

THE MANDARIN AND THE COURTESAN

A mandarin was in love with a courtesan. "I will be yours", she said, "when you have waited for me a hundred nights, sitting on a stool in my garden, beneath my window." But on the ninety-ninth night, the mandarin rose, took up his stool and went away.

Roland Barthes
(1915-1980) French writer.
From *Fragments d'un discours amoureux* © Seuil, Paris, 1977.

Radha and Krishna. The passionate love of the god Krishna's consort Radha, the wife of a cowherd, is a popular theme in Indian art and literature. (Early 19th-century Indian miniature).

Tomb. With that arch, you can hold up a heavy dome, inlaid with marble and mother-of-pearl.

Once, shortly before I left Paris, I was waiting for a train at the Saint Michel metro. I had just seen *Hiroshima mon amour* in a small movie hall at the corner of the Place Saint Michel. You emerge and see in front of you the Seine, and just beyond, the high flying buttresses of the Cathedral of Notre Dame. It had been on the insistence of Stella, Haroun's friend, a most beautiful and vivacious young lady, devoted to the novelist Marguerite Duras. Read her books, she has a wonderful style, read *L'Amant.* Stella gave me a copy.

❤

A SCENE IN THE METRO

There were not many people on the platform. A man of indeterminate age with an untidy beard and crumpled clothing sat slumped in a corner, leaning against a high rubbish bin, looking at nothing in particular, not even at an old bottle of Evian, the small size, its label long since ripped away, half-full of a colourless liquid which could of course have been water. A long line of empty red plastic chairs led away from him.

A large, broad man strolled slowly up and down the platform. His exterior was smoothly shaped by an expressionless face, shiny hair, and hands in trouser pockets which opened the wings of a prosperous overcoat to the wide stretch of a green sweater. He stopped momentarily before the seated figure, held out a crumpled note, then continued his stroll at the same even pace. The face of the drunk opened with surprise, delight. I didn't even ask, the heavens opened and dropped this gift. His hands shook slightly as he opened out the note. A coupon cut from a magazine. He looked towards his benefactor, already steps away, shook his fist, mumbled wretched, incoherent phrases. The other did not stop, turn or change his pace. A woman in a red leather coat, seeing everything, laughed shyly with her companion and watched the "pursuit".

Because the drunk had launched himself from his seat, a pile of rags left behind still bore the imprint of his frail shape. He proceeded jerkily, still mumbling, at a quickening pace behind the broad black back—Why, why did he do this? I didn't ask him for anything, how dare he—while a smooth stroll took the benefactor to the bottom of the stairs and then, like a wave, swept him up to the exit. He had not once looked back or changed pace. We waited for the drunk to make a last dash, launch himself in a dirty, weightless ball into the middle of that solid back. His movement dissipated. He threw the worthless paper violently on the rail tracks, where it floated without effect, and spat a loud gargling stream of phlegm. A few drops reached the distant suede shoes of the curvaceous lady, who stamped her feet angrily. ❤

Jerome Charyn

Behind the silver screen

THE United States of North America is the first "modern" nation. It grew out of a romantic ideal of liberty . . . along very narrow lines. Those who rebelled against the British crown in 1775 called themselves the Sons of Liberty. They were farmers and lawyers and rich grocers—all of them owned property, and all of them were white. But it didn't matter. The idea of liberty began to spread. The farmers and lawyers couldn't squirrel it away like some unwanted shopping list. The nation had terrible conflicts and terrible wars over who could have this liberty and who couldn't.

JEROME CHARYN
is an American writer. His most recent published work is *The New Mystery* (1993).

But the myth of liberty was much more powerful than any narrow, self-defining law. And with that myth came the notion of romantic love. A free man in a free nation could also consider a new kind of love. If marriages had been mostly arranged, and codified like any other law, then that code would have to allow for a little leeway. And it's no accident that a new principality should spring up in a place called California, in the first years of *our* century. That principality is Hollywood, the land of love. It could only have happened in the United States. Other nations have had film capitals, devoted to stars and fabricated cities, but those capitals never had the same enchantment, the same aura of royalty and romance.

And suppose Hollywood was a little foolish. If it invented myths that were mostly fake, who cared? It created a "college" of beautiful faces that could cast beautiful shadows all around the globe. It invented the movie goddess, who lived only for romance. Rita Hayworth. Marilyn Monroe. Rita married Orson Welles *and* Prince Aly Khan, and Marilyn fell in love with Joe DiMaggio, the crown prince of baseball. Both goddesses' fairyland lives fell apart. Rita lost her memory and all her mates. Marilyn killed herself. But no other nation could have produced such sad and powerful figures of love. Rita and Marilyn had obscure, unromantic beginnings—no one is born a movie star, not even in the United States. But they invented their screen personalities out of America's own perverse clay, which can be molded into anything at all. Love and fame are America's real religion. Rita and Marilyn sacrificed themselves for us so that we could devour them, like the love cannibals that we are.

Men *and* women worshipped Marilyn. And while most of us lived out mundane lives as fathers, mothers, daughters, sons, we dreamed of that night-time religion, that world of romance, which was much more devouring than family business or blood.

Our psyches have always been split. We came out of nothing. We invented ourselves. We were new men and women in a New World. We saved our pennies, we bartered, we built little monuments, but that was never enough. We needed someone like Marilyn to inhabit that warm, wet, dark side of ourselves, the side that said *no* to the American ideal of success.

Love is dangerous. Love is cruel. Its goddesses are crazy and fragile. But it's like a terrible hunger we have—our "fix", our food. I fell prey to this food as much as anyone else. It didn't matter where you lived. All ghettos and suburbs were the same. America was homogeneous in this regard. I fell in love at the movies. Where else? The movie theatres bound all of us into one enormous nation. I was born in 1937. By the end of World War II I'd gone from romance to romance, on the screen and off. I loved Elizabeth Taylor and Gene Tierney and the wondrous blond creatures in my second-grade class. I had

Above,
a scene from *The Lady from Shanghai* (1947) with its two stars. Orson Welles, who also directed the film, and Rita Hayworth.
Below,
the hero of *Batman* (1989), a film by Tim Burton.

tummy aches. I sweated. I blinked. Like any other cavalier, I was ready to die for love.

It's almost fifty years since I discovered my first movie. Rita and Marilyn are gone. So has Tierney. Liz Taylor seems to live at that suffering edge where love goddesses have to go. Of course things are different now. The Aids epidemic has turned the very idea of love into a phantom self. Love is more than dangerous. Love is death. . . .

There's another phantom in our psyches. *Nam.* The conflict in Viet Nam did more to undermine the usual American myths than 200 years of American *non*history. The land of the free and the home of the brave was involved in a crazy quicksand, a war that was as much hallucination as anything else. The American GI, who'd become a mythological figure, "Kilroy", the guy who went anywhere, who helped liberate Europe, who dispensed chocolate bars, who smiled without malice, who had an innocent, sexual charm, had suddenly become the murderer of women and children in a land where nobody really wanted him, fighting for some ideal that made no sense. The GI was forever lost, and love went out the window in the United States.

The whole country seemed to suffer a nervous collapse. Sexuality meant guns and warships. Kilroy had travelled too far. he was now an intruder, an unwelcome guest. And what surfaced in the 1980s was an entire generation of greed. Junk bonds. Buyouts on Wall Street. And a new figure: the billionaire. He's young. He's white. He buys art. He traffics in culture. He isn't really mean. He romances money. That is the love of his life.

Marilyn Monroe in Howard Hawks' *Gentlemen prefer blondes* (1954).

A DARK KNIGHT IN SEARCH OF HIS SOUL

The chief emblem of the 1980s wasn't E.T. or Indiana Jones. It wasn't Ronald Reagan. It wasn't Mickey Mouse. It was Batman. Created in the 1930s, along with Dick Tracy, Mandrake the Magician, the Phantom, and Smilin' Jack, Batman was a reclusive millionaire . . . and a modern masked knight. Bruce Wayne. He had a boy assistant, Robin, and a Batmobile. His nemesis was the clown prince of evil, called the Joker. Batman was a 1930s Robin Hood, with a new Sherwood Forest: Gotham City, where crime itself was a comic-book character, with its own lively pull. Batman had a mechanical, wing-like cape and wondrous protruding ears.

But on the screen, in 1989, Batman was just another billionaire. He looked like a bullethead, an ice-blue phallus. At least his enemy, the Joker, could laugh. Batman was a dark knight in search of his psyche and his soul. He might have had a girlfriend (Kim Basinger as photojournalist Vicki Vale), but he was really loveless and alone, like America itself.

Batman is white America: the world outside his own particular castle is invisible to him. He believes in some holy grail of the good, but his mask is one more blinker. He sees nothing. He feels nothing. He is nothing. The moguls of Hollywood wouldn't even allow him to have his boy assistant, fearing that Robin might contaminate Batman, give him an ambiguous sexuality. But the moguls needn't have worried. Batman has no sex other than his own bullethead.

And the crisis most of us have inherited from Nam is an anaesthetized America in search of itself *and* its sexuality. Marilyn remains our one enduring goddess, both near to us and remote. Will we be able to look into the void, see the hollow core of our culture, its dance of death, and redefine who the hell we are? Or will we continue to be a nation of Bruce Waynes, wearing some kind of loveless mask into eternity? I wonder.

BITTERSWEET

A friend asked me:
"What is love?"
I replied: "Love is a confection whose juice is sweet and whose crust is bitter."

From *The Arabian Nights*

Jorge Enrique Adoum

Letter to a lovelorn girl

I am writing this, my sweet, to help you get over this latest heart-break of yours. Each time you had one before, you told me it was the worst and would be the last. Now you're suffering again and once more, of course, you wish you were dead. You won't believe me if I gently repeat that the pain doesn't last, but remember what you said when I spoke to you about the way people feel when their heart is broken for the first time: there won't be another time, you snapped back, because I shall never fall in love again—as if that were possible, as if love were not the only cure for love. . . .

Every time you fall in love the same thing happens, but what you haven't yet understood is that "everlasting" love doesn't last long, for the simple reason that we are always changing. Today we are not quite the same person we were

yesterday, and except in the case of friendship, which endures without vows or promises, it would be too much to expect to go on loving the same person in the same old way through so many changes from day to day. We would perhaps do better to follow the example set by someone more realistic about his fellow-creatures and about the instability of feelings, the man who promised his bride-to-be to love her "as eternally as possible".

People often fail to understand, or else they forget, that love means a constant longing for the physical presence of the loved one, and that once he or she is present the longing, like a slight pain, disappears—something that often happens in marriage. The unacknowledged reason why we experienced that element of pain was that we were afraid someone else would deprive us of the loved one's presence.

I know, or at least I suppose, that women love in a different way, more tenaciously, more obsessively, as if dedicated to one single task and no other. I knew a girl your age whose dream was to get to know Paris but who, on her very first visit, gave up wandering the streets, sitting outside cafés, watching the Seine go by or visiting museums, just to sit at home by the telephone "in case he rings". Something you men are incapable of, she used to say.

We are incapable of a lot of other things too—not that we don't feel love, or feel it less strongly. Incapable, for instance, of giving ourselves up, in an almost mystical way, to such a full-time fixation, to that fruitless turning over and over in the mind of a single problem, that overpowering obsession, incapable of dropping everything else, to the point, sometimes, of forgetting our other activities or even our duties. Love is one of the mainstays of our lives but perhaps—rightly or wrongly—not the only one for us.

I also believe that no-one, man or woman, in the world is worth such suffering, such agony, such a crushing blow to what had only the day before been a normal, healthy human being. Sometimes it takes no more than a letter, a phone call or a cancelled date.

It may be just a word left unspoken or a word that, although wrapped up in a roundabout phrase, nevertheless means goodbye, since there is always a leave-taking involved when one person leaves another for someone else—which is most painful of all—or for another country, which is like taking a new lover, or it may simply be that the affair has bogged down in boredom.

Nicolas Bouvier* speaks of the gratitude he owes to every woman who has left him. Each made way for another, and he draws this simple conclusion from a certain number of failed love affairs: for every separation there is a specific cause—have you looked for the reason in your own case, so as to benefit from it?

If we accustomed ourselves to the idea that the other person could die tomorrow—learning to cope with loss in advance, which is, I believe, enriching and salutary in any relationship—we would immediately feel more respect for one another, we would refrain from saying things that cannot be taken back. Isn't it incredible that love should rest upon mere words, which can just as easily break and destroy it?

I know for sure that the reason why you are suffering now just as much as you suffered before is that the one you love is not with you, but I also know that absence can smooth over difficulties, can even make those obstacles that appear when you are together vanish into thin air. Absence is a sleight of hand, a conjuring trick that, if it goes on long enough, can even turn your invincible love, which now seems stronger than yourself, into "just one of those things", a minor incident that is already past and almost done with. So much so that when two parted lovers meet again—as in the tangos of Gardel—they wonder how they could have been so carried away and feel ashamed of having been so blind. Growing older a day at a time prevents us from seeing the changes taking place in ourselves, but sooner or later blind Cupid opens his eyes and learns to see.

Everyone is receptive to love poems and love songs, a world of inexhaustible riches but at the same time monotonous. However profound their imagery and whatever their verbal felicities, they are all alike, in the same way that love stories, in spite of their differences, are all alike, but they seldom sing of requited, lasting love. Not because, as Aragon says, there is no happy love. It must exist somewhere, but it seems unable to survive the passage of time. Most of these songs and poems prefer to dwell upon, and bemoan, for-

JORGE ENRIQUE ADOUM,
Ecuadorian poet and novelist. His most recent published work is *El tiempo y las palabras* (Libresa publishers, Quito, 1992).

gotten, star-crossed loves, love destroyed by over-indulgence or lack of money, fleeting or unattainable love. You won't believe me, but I have even known girls who found something beautiful about "love-sickness" and who went in for those passionate epistolary affairs that are so good for Post Office business.

I am not saying this to console you: I really believe we have not yet learned how to love. When people talk about dislike, hatred, anger, resentment or revenge, we know exactly where we are, but that enormous word "love" rings hollow. We cram into the empty space all sorts of feelings and intentions that have nothing to do with it or even contradict it: the desire for protection or togetherness; the will to dominate (the demands made on women by living together often end up type-casting them in the role of mother-cum-secretary, if not of housemaid too); a distorted sense of ownership, equating women with beasts of burden; the pleasure of playing to an audience; a taste for ostentation or for keeping up appearances; a longing for company when you have only the cat to talk to in the middle of the night; or else the need for someone to share our troubles with and to hold out a helping hand when we stumble.

What I mean is that we are still living in the past, in a bygone time when women were goddesses or priestesses, slaves or prostitutes, idolized or despised, whereas true love is a relationship between equals. If we make an effort—like when we were in school and needed good marks at the end of the year to go up into the next class—and if we try, simply and unassumingly, to build the framework of married life in long, slow stages, as carefully as if we were building a house of cards, then perhaps we shall, in a few thousand years' time, learn to love without introducing qualifications, or at least without leaving scars, without causing pain, without denying one's own or another person's right to live his or her own life, without heaping reproaches on each other, without inflicting so many sacrifices, supposedly freely accepted, on one another.

Stricken with this love-sickness that you think is incurable—when in fact it just comes and goes rapidly like a fever—you are perhaps unaware, my little girl, that we all suffer from it, that none of us can get over it and we don't want to. It's like when the sea catches you unawares, choking you, stinging your eyes and bruising you inwardly. Or if you prefer it's like when you breast the waves, striking out into them in spite of the warning they have just given you, swimming further and further out until one wave stronger than the rest swamps you and hurts you. That's the way it will be as long as the sea is the sea.

Each time you will emerge enriched by the experience. From each of these men, and from yourself too, you will draw some lesson that will help you cope better with your next love—which will, you'll see, again be the "only" one and "for ever", like the one before. Alas, I shan't be there for you to tell the story to, for you to cry on an old man's shoulder, for me to try to console you by stroking your hair or hopefully to cheer you up by talking nonsense.

So all I can do now is to plant a kiss on your little wounded heart; for it is your heart, your pride, that is wounded, not your soul.

* Nicolas Bouvier, contemporary Swiss writer. Author of *L'Usage du monde*, and other works.

UNESCO IN ACTION

NEWSBRIEFS

PRESERVING BEIRUT'S PAST

Archaeological sites in Beirut are being excavated and documented, and the city's historic quarters being rehabilitated as part of a UNESCO project entitled "Historical aspects of the reconstruction of the Central District of Beirut". The Hariri Foundation, a Lebanese charitable institution that has been working in the fields of education and culture since the 1970s, has offered to contribute a million dollars to cover the project's local expenses. The donation will be released after the signing of an agreement between the Lebanese authorities and UNESCO on the project's plan of operations and after funding has been found for non-local expenditures.

THE HISTORY OF CENTRAL ASIA

UNESCO has just published the first volume of its long-awaited 6-volume *History of the Civilizations of Central Asia*. This vast region, an extraordinary melting-pot of civilizations, today embraces northern India, northeastern Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, western China, Mongolia and the five new Central Asian republics: Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The first volume, which has been written by noted scholars most of whom are from the region, deals with the Palaeolithic and Neolithic cultures and with the Bronze and Iron Ages, ending with the pastoral and nomadic tribes at the beginning of the last millennium of the pre-Christian era. The second, scheduled for publication later this year, will deal with the development of sedentary and nomadic civilizations up to the third century B.C.

Volume I (535 pages, price 200 French Francs) is available from the UNESCO Bookstore, 7, Place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07, France.

GARDENERS OF THE EARTH

Jardiniers de la Terre (Gardeners of the Earth) was the title of an international film festival held at UNESCO headquarters on 26 and 27 January 1993 in connection with the Organization's "Man and the Biosphere" programme. Some thirty films were shown and fourteen countries took part. The two top UNESCO prizes went to Bruno Sorrentino (United Kingdom) for his documentary *Rivers of Sand* and to Bernard Billois (France) for his film *Sauver la petite Baïse*.

PLACES OF HONOUR IN THE WORLD HERITAGE

Twenty new sites were added to UNESCO's World Heritage List in January 1993: the town of Butrinti (Albania); the mines of Rammelsberg and the historic town of Goslar (Germany); Fraser Island (Australia); the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park (Belarus/Poland); Angkor (Cambodia); the regions of Wulingyuan and Huanglong and the valley of Jiuzhaigou (China); the pueblo of Taos, in New Mexico (United States); the historic monuments of Novgorod and its environs and those of Vladimir and Suzdal, and the Solovets Islands (Russian Federation); the cathedral of Bourges (France); the ancient town of Pythagoreion and the temple of Heraion in Samos (Greece); the pre-Hispanic town of El Tajín (Mexico); the old town of Zamosc (Poland); the historic centres of Prague, Cesky Krumlov and Telc (Czech and Slovak Republic); and the archaeological site of Ban Chiang (Thailand).

A photograph of Angkor is reproduced with those of twelve other World Heritage sites on a high-quality 1993 calendar produced by the German stationery firm Zanders and UNESCO (not for sale).

SOUL-BIRDS

An exhibition of abstract paintings and hundreds of drawings of birds by Sri Chinmoy, a poet, painter and musician who hails from Bengal, was held at UNESCO from 9 to 13 November 1992. For this visionary artist birds symbolize the soul. A roving ambassador of peace whose works have been shown all over the world, he composed this New Year peace message for 1993:

God is dreaming,
Newness singing,
Oneness blossoming,
Fullness dancing.

Hope no more gropes
Life without slopes.
Splendid depths and heights
Transform bondage-nights.

STATISTICAL YEARBOOK 1992

The latest (1992) edition of UNESCO's trilingual (English/French/Spanish) *Statistical Yearbook* contains data on education, science, culture and the arts from some 200 countries and territories. Introductory texts to chapters and table headings also appear in Arabic and Russian.

Copies are obtainable at the price of 375 French Francs from the Sales Unit of the UNESCO Publishing Office, 7, Place de Fontenoy, 75352, Paris 07, France.
Tel. (1) 45 68 10 00
Fax (1) 42.73.30.07.

COMMENTARY *by Federico Mayor*

This article is one of a series in which the Director-General of UNESCO sets out his thinking on matters of current concern

UNESCO and the human genome

UNESCO is taking part in the ambitious international Human Genome Project, within the limits of its resources and in keeping with its intellectual vocation. Through the meetings it organizes or assists, the workshops it runs and the training courses it helps to finance, it is pursuing a threefold aim under this project: that of encouraging collaboration and international co-ordination, promoting the participation of Third World countries, and stimulating debate on the project's many implications, notably in the sphere of ethics.

One of the tasks entrusted to UNESCO by the international community after the Second World War was to contribute to the production, dissemination and exchange of knowledge. This role of intellectual co-operation has been confirmed and reasserted on many occasions, and again quite recently. It would seem that in the turmoil left behind by the collapse of our accustomed geopolitical, ideological and philosophical systems, the nations are seeking mental landmarks which can only be identified through continual intellectual dialogue.

UNESCO is the only institution of the United Nations system to include science as such among its fields of competence. This being so, it is responsible for contributing to the worldwide dissemination of major discoveries and innovations in the contemporary biological and medical sciences.

But in this sphere we come up against a fundamental inequality in the division of wealth and resources between North and South. Only a handful of industrialized countries have the necessary scientific potential to make the breakthroughs from which the entire human race could benefit. At the present time the countries of the South are mere spectators of forms of progress which could, however, relieve them of suffering which was previously thought to be an inevitable part of their condition.

Lacking the wherewithal, the Third World is excluded from the latest advances in science and technology. As a result, it is preyed upon by unscrupulous enterprises, which set a tremendous price on the trickle of high technology they provide. There is also a danger that the poor countries will be left out of the ethical debate that is going on in the developed countries. Should they be victims of this twofold discrimination? The answer to this question is *no.* UNESCO will do all it can to see that they are invited to every event where sharing, exchange and debate go on.

Bearing in mind the manifold social and moral implications of the uses to which findings in genetics and in the biomedical sciences as a whole can be put, we have entered into fruitful collaboration in the bioethical sphere with fellow members of the United Nations system and other international organizations, associations and research institutes in order to clarify and map out a complex and rapidly expanding field.

I have decided to carry out broad consultations on bioethics among scientists (specialists in the life sciences and the social and human sciences), jurists and philosophers from very varied cultural backgrounds. An international bioethics committee may, I hope, eventually emerge, and its many duties would certainly include the preparation of an international convention on the human genome.

The task will be an arduous one, since satisfactory answers must first be found to a number of questions. For example, should an attempt be made to find lowest common denominators and to build on that basis, or should some first principles be laid down from the start, as the foundation for universal rules? How should the relativity of ethical values—a reflection of the diversity of cultural representations, beliefs and laws—be dealt with?

The stakes involved in genetic mapping are immense. For the first time the human being as such forms part of the heritage to be saved. ■

RECENT RECORDS

TRADITIONAL MUSIC

The UNESCO Collection of Traditional Music is one of the outstanding achievements of UNESCO's programme to preserve and revitalize the non-material cultural heritage, which, because it is transmitted orally or by gesture, is in even greater danger of being lost to posterity than endangered monuments.

The collection consists of three series, "Music and musicians of the world", "Anthology of traditional musics", and "Traditional music of today", and comprises both new recordings and re-issues on CD and cassette from UNESCO's earlier collections, started in 1961. The collection already includes fifty-five titles. The recordings are on sale at the UNESCO bookshop, 7, Place de Fontenoy, 75007 Paris, France, tel. (Paris) 45.68.22.22, and in many record shops.

INDONESIA. *Music from West Java. Anthology of Traditional Musics*
UNESCO CD D 8041

These recordings, made in 1970 and illustrating the Javanese influence on the culture of the Sunda region, are among the finest examples of gamelan music. This fascinating Indonesian musical tradition has inspired various Western composers and jazzmen; Wesleyan University (United States), for instance, has a complete gamelan orchestra. Sundanese music includes popular forms such as the *kacapi suling*, an instrumental ensemble consisting of flute and zithers, the music of the former royal courts, of which the track "Gonjang - Sapuratina" is an example, or scenes from the Ramayana ("Walang Golek", played here by one of the old *gamelan degung* ensembles; this type of music dates back to the Hindu period of Sunda's history, before the conversion of Java to Islam, and is specific to this part of the island). The melodies, tuned to various modes, including the *salendro*, are delightfully developed with a profusion of different timbres and rhythms.

POPULAR MUSIC

ELTON JOHN. *The One*
CD Rocket 512 360-2

On this album—cover concept by Gianni Versace with a portrait of the artist by fashion photographer Patrick Demarchelier—Elton John offers the listener several intricate, poetic texts, rich in metaphor and allegory. Most of the songs are orchestrated with synthesizers producing dense layers of sound. They range from hard rock ("Sweat it out") to gospel ("When a woman doesn't want you", with piano accompaniment) and from disco ("Understanding women") to country. Elton John fans will be delighted to find him sharing the track "Runaway train" with the legendary guitarist, and occasional singer, Eric Clapton.

JAZZ

ROY HARGROVE. *The Vibe*
Hargrove (trumpet), Antonio Maurice Hart (alto sax), Marc Anthony Cary (piano), Rodney Thomas Whitaker (bass), Gregory Hutchinson (drums)

With Wynton Marsalis and Wallace Roney, Roy Hargrove is certainly the best young trumpeter around today, and Antonio Maurice Hart is hot on the trail of Branford Marsalis (who incidentally features on the tracks "Pinocchio" and "Runnin' out of time"). Hargrove and Hart dazzle audiences with their insatiable appetite for playing (during their European tour last summer they had two hours' sleep a night on average, jamming in the street, in clubs or in their hotel rooms after concerts). Their sound is solid and happy, rooted in what is sometimes called the "neo-classical" jazz of the 1950s and 1960s. This album includes Hargrove's previous successes "The vibe" and "Caryisms", Wayne Shorter's "Pinocchio" and Miles Davis' "Milestones". Trombonist Frank Lacy is heard on three tracks, David "Fathead" Newman on "Alter ego" and Jack McDuff on "Blues for Booty Green's". The rhythm section is excellent too, and more is sure to be heard of Marc Anthony Cary.

Ella Fitzgerald sings the George and Ira Gershwin songbook
Double CD album, Verve 825 024-2

When Ella met impresario Norman Granz in the 1950s, her career was in the doldrums and she was recording lack-lustre material. It was thanks to his idea of cutting the "songbooks" of the composers of the great American musicals that Ella achieved world-wide fame. The "Gershwin Songbook" is probably the best in the series. With marvellous backing from the Nelson Riddle Orchestra—Riddle spent a whole year writing the arrangements—Ella's voice, at the top of its form, glides effortlessly through the songs with stupendous clarity of diction, feeling for the words and warm vibrato. The witty ditties, "Beginner's luck", "'S wonderful" or "I've got a crush on you", are gems of their kind. This is a disc for your desert island.

STANLEY TURRENTINE. *Let it go*
Turrentine (tenor sax), Shirley Scott (Hammond organ), Ron Carter or Bob Cranshaw (bass), Mack Simpkins or Otis Candy Finch (drums)
CD Impulse GRP 11042

"Let it go", a re-issue of a pleasant, unassuming recording made in 1966, features the organist Shirley Scott, often heard in Paris where she settled a few years later, and Stanley Turrentine, before his more commercial "fusion" phase. Like Nathan Davis, another tenor sax player from Pittsburgh, Turrentine has an extremely clear articulation and a keen feeling for the beat, and, again like Davis, knows how to give each note a different colour. Scott has a flowing touch and her Hammond organ swings in the style of Jimmy Smith. This is a CD to savour at home in the still of the night.

CLASSICAL MUSIC

BERLIOZ. *Béatrice et Bénédict*
Orchestra and chorus of the Lyons Opera, conducted by John Nelson.
Double CD album, Erato 2292-45773-2

Berlioz' last work, *Béatrice et Bénédict*, a two-act comic opera based on Shakespeare's comedy *Much ado about nothing*, is seldom performed. As Berlioz himself observed, the score is a difficult one, the male roles in particular, though he thought it one of the liveliest and most original he had written. The story takes place in Sicily. Beatrice, niece of the governor Leonato, and Benedict, an officer of Don Pedro's conquering army, neither of them inclined towards matrimony, finally succumb, after various twists of the plot, to love. The music is light and vivacious, the orchestra is conducted with sensitivity and precision, and the singing is agreeable in timbre.

ISABELLE LEYMARIE ■

begins to emerge. Democratic states should aim to provide social benefits, but should such benefits really be considered as rights? If the answer is "yes", then we have a situation in which the state will tend to absorb civil society in order to respond to all its socio-economic needs. This is a very dangerous process. That is why, in the post-war debates at the United Nations about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the question of formal rights versus social rights was central to a highly political confrontation between the United States and Europe on the one hand and the Soviet Union on the other.

What was at stake was not just a specific political choice but an ideological choice. Do we want to live in a liberal society that, while it responds to demands for social justice, does not treat them as rights, or do we make social justice a fully-fledged right and give the state the job of implementing it? If we do, it means giving the state powers that become exorbitant in every respect. In the former Soviet Union, negligence at work could be considered an anti-revolutionary act and lead to years of internment. That is the perverse logic of social rights.

■ *There have of course been attempts to produce a synthesis.*

—I think the republican idea has played a very important role in trying to reconcile these two types of rights by means of universal suffrage. If, as happened during the Third Republic in France, you establish universal suffrage and encourage people to participate in political decisions, then you are heading for the conciliatory logic of the welfare state. The framework of the liberal state, strictly speaking, still exists, but the citizens by voting call on this liberal state to pay increased attention to social justice and to intervene more actively in civil society. This represents a big change. Here it is the citizens who are telling the state what they want. Roughly speaking, this is what has happened in Western social democracies. We have never moved away from a liberal political regime, and yet there is continual state intervention to promote social justice. Providing that the right balance is struck between civil liberties and intervention by the authorities, the welfare state seems to me unbeatable as a democratic model.

■ *Surely you're not suggesting that it's some sort of magic wand! This is a particularly important issue if you look at things from the standpoint of the emerging democracies of the South. They have other balances to think about, such as those between the rights of the individual and the expression of certain collective values, between national decision-making authorities and the world market.*

—We could indeed look further into the three tiers of democracy and the possible links between them. The first tier is that of suffrage, which may be direct or indirect, universal or based on a property qualification; the second is that of national representation—members of parliament, senators, Lords or whatever; thirdly there is the tier responsible for overseeing the rule of law—constitutional courts and so on. Strange though it may seem, no one has thought about improving these three tiers, or even changing them completely. Why have they stayed the same for centuries? Europe, as well as the countries of the South, should think about certain improvements in their functioning and in the links between them. If nothing is done, political institutions and civil society will grow further and further apart, with increasingly serious consequences.

The construction of a European system has increased the risk of a major political crisis that can only play into the hands of demagogues and nationalists, who will claim that they are closer to the people and their preoccupations than traditional politicians are. There is a tendency for the various levels of democratic representation to become increasingly remote from individual citizens, whereas democracy cannot exist unless citizens can find their way around the political institutions. For a multitude of reasons, the citizens of the various European countries have difficulty in finding their way around the European institutions. Nobody in Italy or France or Germany knows what the Council of Europe or the European Parliament really is.

■ *One of the strong points of democracies has been to stimulate sometimes radical criticism from within. How do you explain the fact that they have become lethargic and accepted this increasing remoteness without reacting?*

—Unlike totalitarian states or traditional societies, democracies are places where individuals have the right to criticize the law and the political establishment. But between the wars, and especially after the Second World War, European intellectuals and artists—the potential democrats, so to speak—turned to communism. There were historical reasons for this. The struggle against Nazism, then against colonialism, led intellectuals of the Left to criticize fundamental Western values, including formal democracy, which they treated simply as an outgrowth of capitalism. Much of this criticism of formal democracy in the last seventy years was unfortunately

cast in the mould of communist, leftist, Maoist or Trotskyist ideology, the main result being to obscure the real questions instead of bringing them into the open and helping to find fresh solutions.

Even reformism was carried along by this current and became trapped in communist patterns of thought. In France, for example, Léon Blum made a famous speech to the Socialist Party Congress at Tours in 1920 in which he declared that he was opposed to the Bolsheviks as regards the means used to achieve the dictatorship of the proletariat, but not as regards the end itself. Caught up in the communist eschatology, the reformist platform seemed no more than a diluted, flabby, insipid and deodorized version of communism. Things have changed in the last few years, but there's a lot of catching-up to do.

■ *In your view, what are the first questions that reformism should address after overcoming this handicap?*

—It must take a fresh look at the three critiques of democracy. Two of these come from outside—the Marxist view, which criticizes democracy in the name of the radiant future, and the generally speaking Romantic, fascist view, based on the idea of the lost past. The third critique comes from within the democracies themselves. It is based on their own principles and their own promises, and points out the gap between those principles and the reality.

Why does reformism seem so uninspiring these days? I've given a lot of thought to the question of reformulating reformism, and I have come to realize two things. One is that the strength of leftist or communist utopian ideologies was due to the fact that they borrowed from religion—not the politico-theological elements Marxism rejected, not the superstitious aspect of religion, but its claim to possess the answer to the meaning of life. Marxism claimed to express values that transcended the life of any person living in the here-and-now. What was splendid in the Marxist utopia—or perhaps one should say utopias, in the plural—was that one was working for something higher than one's own life, that the lives of individuals and the fate of humanity as a whole touched at some point.

Unless there is a "here below" and a "beyond", life has no meaning. If we do not accept the existence of this dichotomy, we can only ask elementary questions about the meaning of life. If our acts only have meaning in the context of some specific project, the question of the meaning of this meaning can never arise. The meaning of existence has to transcend the partial, mundane meanings we give to our daily lives. Marxism gave an answer to this fundamental question, but now it's lost. That's the first point. Reformism must rediscover something of the same kind.

Paradoxically, though, it must also step outside that framework and free itself from the straitjacket of secularized religion. That's the second point. To do so, it must set itself a so to speak unending task, not the achievement of an ultimate purpose like that of the Bolsheviks, but a purpose that is always moving forward and is never fully achieved, a purpose in line with an approach that has at last been secularized. We must find a new purpose in life, but a secular purpose. In every field—science, education, culture, politics—it is the reinstatement of the idea of progress within the perspective of an endless task, the pursuit of perfectibility and freedom, that can give an ultimate meaning to all that we do.

■ *When you come down to it, the biggest paradox of all is that theology, whether religious or Marxist, should have an end. Theology sees history in terms of the end of history, just as a believer holds that after death comes an end, admission into Paradise.*

—That's right. For Marxism, the coming of communism is the end of history, whereas in the secular perspective I am suggesting, it is the idea of the endless nature of the task ahead that gives meaning to existence. Once we know that the task is endless, we also know for sure that our present efforts are not vain. Continual self-improvement is important because it never goes to waste. To think of perfectibility as the pathway to culture and culture as an ongoing process of liberation, as an ongoing expansion of human experience—perhaps this is where the essential meanings come together in a secular universe. ❐

The UNESCO COURIER

46th YEAR
Published monthly in 32 languages and in Braille by UNESCO, The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
31, rue François Bonvin, 75015 Paris, France.

Director: Bahgat Elnadi
Editor-in-chief: Adel Rifaat

EDITORIAL STAFF (Paris)
Managing Editor: Gillian Whitcomb
English edition: Roy Malkin
French edition: Alain Lévêque, Neda El Khazen
Spanish edition: Miguel Labarca, Araceli Ortiz de Urbina
Art Unit/Production: Georges Servat
Illustrations: Ariane Bailey (Tel. 45.68.46.90)
Documentation: Violette Ringelstein (Tel. 45.68.46.85)
Liaison with non-Headquarters editions and press: Solange Belin (Tel. 45.68.46.87)
Secretariat: Annie Brachet (Tel. 45.68.47.15), Prithi Perera
Administrative Assistant: Prithi Perera
Selection in Braille in English, French, Spanish and Korean: Mouna Chatta (45.68.47.14)

NON-HEADQUARTERS EDITIONS
Russian: Alexander Melnikov (Moscow)
German: Werner Merkli (Berne)
Arabic: El-Said Mahmoud El-Sheniti (Cairo)
Italian: Mario Guidotti (Rome)
Hindi: Ganga Prasad Vimal (Delhi)
Tamil: M. Mohammed Mustafa (Madras)
Persian: H. Sadough Vanini (Teheran)
Dutch: Claude Montrieux (Antwerp)
Portuguese: Benedicto Silva (Rio de Janeiro)
Turkish: Mefra Ilgazer (Istanbul)
Urdu: Wali Mohammad Zaki (Islamabad)
Catalan: Joan Carreras i Martí (Barcelona)
Malaysian: Azizan Hamzah (Kuala Lumpur)
Korean: Yi Tong-ok (Seoul)
Swahili: Leonard J. Shuma (Dar-es-Salaam)
Slovene: Aleksandra Kornhauser (Ljubljana)
Chinese: Shen Guofen (Beijing)
Bulgarian: Dragomir Petrov (Sofia)
Greek: Sophie Costopoulos (Athens)
Sinhala: Neville Piyadigama (Colombo)
Finnish: Marjatta Oksanen (Helsinki)
Basque: Juxto Egaña (Donostia)
Vietnamese: Do Phuong (Hanoi)
Pashto: Ghoti Khaweri (Kabul)
Hausa: Habib Alhassan (Sokoto)
Bangla: Abdullah A.M. Sharafuddin (Dhaka)
Ukrainian: Victor Stelmakh (Kiev)
Galician: Xabier Senín Fernández (Santiago de Compostela)

SALES AND PROMOTION
Subscriptions: Marie-Thérèse Hardy (Tel. 45.68.45.65), Jocelyne Despouy, Jacqueline Louise-Julie, Manjrhan Ngonekeo, Michel Ravassard, Mohamed Salah El Din
Customer service: Ginette Motreff (Tel. 45.68.45.64)
Accounts: (Tel. 45.68.45.65)
Shipping: (Tel. 45.68.47.50)

SUBSCRIPTIONS. Tel.: 45.68.45.65
1 year: 211 French francs. 2 years: 396 FF.
Binder for one year's issues: 72 FF
Developing countries:
1 year: 132 French francs. 2 years: 211 FF.
Payment can be made with any convertible currency to the order of UNESCO.

Individual articles and photographs not copyrighted may be reprinted providing the credit line reads "Reprinted from the *Unesco Courier*", plus date of issue, and three voucher copies are sent to the editor. Signed articles reprinted must bear author's name. Non-copyright photos will be supplied on request. Unsolicited manuscripts cannot be returned unless accompanied by an international reply coupon covering postage. Signed articles express the opinions of the authors and do not necessarily represent the opinions of UNESCO or those of the editors of the *Unesco Courier*. Photo captions and headlines are written by the *Unesco Courier* staff. The boundaries on maps published in the magazine do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by Unesco or the United Nations. The *Unesco Courier* is produced in microform (microfilm and/or microfiche) by: (1) UNESCO, 7 Place de Fontenoy, 75700 Paris; (2) University Microfilms (Xerox), Ann Arbor, Michigan 48100 U.S.A.; (3) N.C.R. Microcard Edition, Indian Head Inc., 111 West 40th Street, New York, U.S.A.; (4) Bell and Howell Co., Old Mansfield Road, Wooster, Ohio 44691, U.S.A.

IMPRIMÉ EN FRANCE (Printed in France)
DÉPOT LÉGAL: 01 APRIL 1993
COMMISSION PARITAIRE N° 71842 DIFFUSÉ PAR LES N.M.P.P.
Photocomposition: Le Courier de l'UNESCO.
Photogravure: ETIC GRAPHIC. Impression: IMAYE GRAPHIC, Z.I. des Touches, Bd Henri-Becquerel, 53021 Laval Cedex (France).
ISSN 0304-3118 N° 4-1993-OPI-93-514A

This issue comprises 52 pages and a 4-page insert between pages 10-11 and 42-43.

Theme
of the next issue
(May 1993):

WATER

Also featuring an interview with

CHARLES MALAMOUD

specialist in the religions
of ancient India

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Cover, page 3: Christian Zuber © Rapho, Paris. **Pages 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 49, 50:** All Rights Reserved. **Pages 10-11:** Dennis Stock © Magnum, Paris. **Pages 12-13:** Gerald Buthaud © Cosmos, Paris. **Pages 14 (above), 17:** Renaudeau © Hoa Qui, Paris. **Page 14 (below):** © Jean Loup Charmet, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. **Pages 15, 18:** © Jean Loup Charmet, Paris. **Page 16:** Richard Kalvar © Magnum, Paris. **Pages 20-21:** © Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. **Page 22:** Salgado © Magnum, Paris. **Page 23:** Richer © Hoa Qui, Paris. **Page 24:** Valentin © Hoa Qui, Paris. **Page 25:** O. Martel © Rapho, Paris. **Page 26:** Belzeaux © Rapho, Paris. **Page 27 (above):** Seraillier © Rapho, Paris. **Page 27 (centre):** FAO, Rome. **Page 28 (above):** Nigel © Jacana, Paris. **Page 28 (above):** de Wilde © Jacana, Paris. **Page 29 (above):** © Georges Servat, Paris. **Page 29 (below):** Georg Gerster © Rapho, Paris. **Pages 31, 32-33:** © Max Fourny Collection, Musée d'Art Naïf de l'Ile de France, Vicq, France. **Page 34:** Erich Lessing © Magnum, Archeological Museum, Speralonga. **Page 35:** Inge Morath © Magnum, Paris. **Pages 36, 39:** © Roland Michaud, Paris. **Pages 37, 38:** Bruno Barbey © Magnum, Paris. **Pages 40-41:** © The Kobal Collection, London. **Page 41 (below):** M. Close © Sygma, Paris. **Page 42:** © *Cahiers du Cinéma*, Paris. **Pages 43, 45:** © Alain Patrick Neyrat © Rapho, Paris. **Page 46:** UNESCO-Dominique Roger.

EACH MONTH, ESSENTIAL READING FOR AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEMS OF TODAY AND TOMORROW

EACH MONTH: A TOPIC OF UNIVERSAL INTEREST SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF LEADING SPECIALISTS OF DIFFERENT COUNTRIES AND VARYING POINTS OF VIEW...

WOMEN SPEAK OUT ON THE ENVIRONMENT... ART IN THE STREET... REDISCOVERING 1492... IN PRAISE OF TOLERANCE... UNIVERSALITY: A EUROPEAN VISION?... THE KNOWLEDGE BEARERS... TELE...VISIONS... THE CHALLENGE OF DEMOCRACY... THE COMPETITIVE WORLD OF SPORT... EXPLORING THE COSMOS... VIOLENCE... PSYCHOANALYSIS: THE HIDDEN I... A TIME TO LOVE...

EACH MONTH: AN INTERVIEW WITH A PERSONALITY FROM THE WORLD OF ART, LITERATURE, SCIENCE, CULTURE...

FRANÇOIS MITTERRAND... JORGE AMADO... RICHARD ATTENBOROUGH... JEAN-CLAUDE CARRIÈRE... JEAN LACOUTURE... FEDERICO MAYOR... NAGUIB MAHFOUZ... SEMBENE OUSMANE... ANDREI VOZNESENSKY... FRÉDÉRIC ROSSIF... HINNERK BRUHNS... CAMILO JOSÉ CELA... VACLAV HAVEL... SERGEI S. AVERINTSEV... ERNESTO SÁBATO... GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND... CLAUDE LÉVI-STRAUSS... LEOPOLDO ZEA... PAULO FREIRE... DANIEL J. BOORSTIN... FRANÇOIS JACOB... MANU DIBANGO... FAROUK HOSNY... SADRUDDIN AGA KHAN... JORGE LAVELLI... LÉON SCHWARTZENBERG... TAHAR BEN JELLOUN... GABRIEL GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ... JACQUES-YVES COUSTEAU... MELINA MERCOURI... CARLOS FUENTES... JOSEPH KI-ZERBO... VANDANA SHIVA... WILLIAM STYRON... OSCAR NIEMEYER... MIKIS THEODORAKIS... ATAHUALPA YUPANQUI... HERVÉ BOURGES... ABDEL RAHMAN EL BACHA... SUSANA RINALDI... HUBERT REEVES... JOSÉ CARRERAS... A LETTER FROM FREUD TO EINSTEIN... LUC FERRY...

EACH MONTH: REGULAR FEATURES ON THE ENVIRONMENT, THE WORLD HERITAGE, UNESCO ACTIVITIES WORLDWIDE...